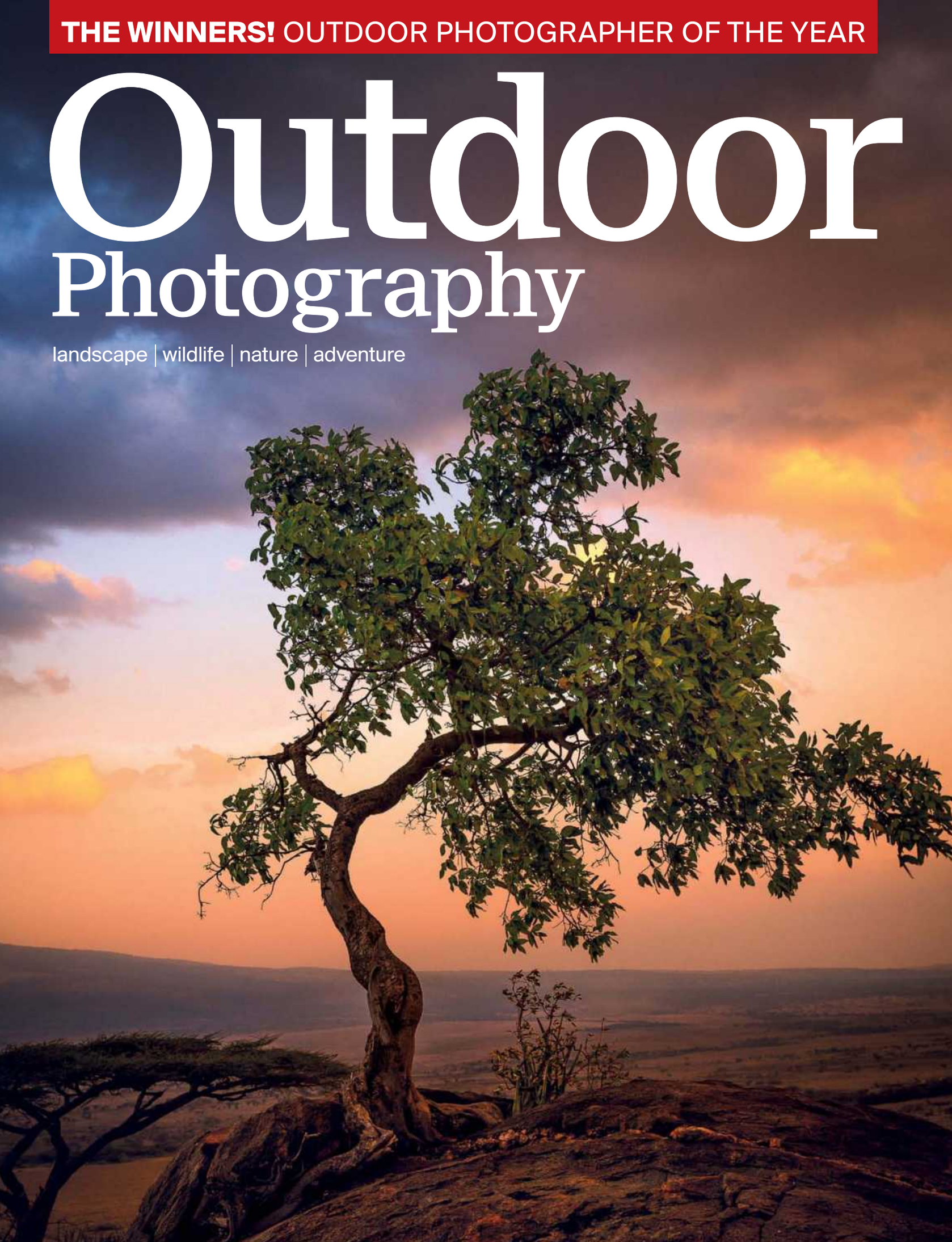
THE WINNERS! OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

Outdoor Photography

landscape | wildlife | nature | adventure







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EDITOR'S LETTER

Drum roll, please...

The latest Outdoor Photographer of the Year competition is drawing to a close. As this issue goes on sale, we will be preparing to announce the overall winner live at the Telegraph Outdoor Show in London ExCel. In this issue we are thrilled to showcase the eight category winning images (*see page 53*); the photographers of which are all in the mix for that grand prize of an exclusive spot on the epic Fjällräven Polar dog sled expedition in the Scandinavian Arctic.

The record number of entries gave the judging panel a real headache, with the extremely high quality of images being remarked upon by all the judges. In the end, it came down to the finest of details, the hard to define differences that made these eight photos connect with us ever so slightly more than the others. An indicator of how high the quality bar was is that the cover of this issue and the Opening Shot in this and the previous issues were all entries in the competition that didn't quite make the final cut. It was a brutal and long day here in the *Outdoor Photography* boardroom! After seeing so many superb photographs it is inevitable that the winners are just the tip of a wonderful iceberg, and so this year, for the first time, we have produced a beautiful book featuring all the winning and selected other images – over 150 photographs in total. The book goes on general sale on the 6th March, and is available to pre-order now at a special discounted price from opoty.co.uk. We're sure it will provide much inspiration and enjoyment.

The competition category winners have already garnered much attention from the national and international media, including coverage in the *Telegraph*, *Independent* and *Guardian* and a TV segment on the Thomson Reuters channel TRT World in their arts and culture programme Showcase. The buzz on social media when we announced the winners was extraordinary too, so thanks to all who were part of that. Enjoy the images, and look out for the overall winner in next month's issue.



Steve Watkins

GET IN TOUCH

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WRITE TO US Outdoor Photography, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1XN

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COVER IMAGE

Canadian photographer Jacques-André Dupont took this stunning image around sunset just outside the Ngorongoro crater in Tanzania. Find out how to compose your own masterful landscapes on page 30.

THE ISSUE *at a glance*



Wildlife photographer Sam Rowley talks about his work – *page 18*



Lee Frost guides us through creating strong compositions – *page 30*



See the Outdoor Photographer of the Year category winners – *page 53*



Andy Luck puts the Sony RX100 IV through its paces – *page 92*

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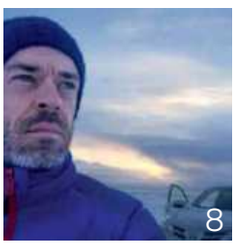
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IN THE MAGAZINE THIS MONTH...



Jacques-André Dupont is a passionate part-time photographer based in Montreal, Canada. His work, which focuses on wildlife and nature, has been featured in major magazines and websites such as *National Geographic*, *Paris Match* and the *Telegraph*. He has also enjoyed success in several photo competitions.
jadupontphoto.com



Chris Davis is a photographer based in Surrey who has spent the last 20 years working as a VFX artist in the advertising industry at the highest level. He is now a keen landscape photographer with an interest in producing creative, artistic photographs.
chrisdavis-photography.com



Nick Smith is a writer and photographer specialising in travel and environmental issues. He is a contributing editor on the *Explorers Journal* and is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.
nicksmithphoto.com



Sam Rowley is a young wildlife photographer from London, with almost 10 years' experience. He has more than 20 awards to his name, including winning a category of Wildlife Photographer of the Year. He is currently studying biology at Bristol University.
sam-rowley.com



Pete Bridgwood is a fine art landscape photographer and writer. He is fascinated by the creative foundations of landscape photography and passionate about exploring the emotional elements of the art.
petebridgwood.com



Over the last 20 years, **Lee Frost** has become one of the UK's leading landscape and travel photographers and one of the world's bestselling photography authors. He also leads sell-out photo workshops and tours.
leefrost.co.uk



Camillo Berenos is an Edinburgh-based landscape photographer. A biologist by training, he is passionate about the outdoors in general, especially wild places. As a keen hiker, much of his photography takes place at high altitudes in the Scottish Highlands.
berenosphotography.com



Paul Harris trained as a photojournalist. He is passionate about storytelling through his travel, adventure and documentary imagery; balancing the road less travelled with the spirit of the land and its peoples. Paul is a sought-after tutor, and leads photo tours for Wild Photography Holidays.
paulharrisphotography.com



Carlton Doudney is a landscape photographer based in Perthshire. As a kitchen-bound chef, he loves getting outside as much as he can. And as a keen mountain walker, the main focus for his photography is in high places, year round.



Chris Weston is a professional wildlife photojournalist. He has travelled widely to document the issues and challenges facing many of the world's rarest species, and is the principal photographer for the NGO Animals on the Edge.
chrisweston.photography



Mark Horton is a nature and wildlife photographer from Surrey Heath, with a particular passion for the tiny but fascinating world of invertebrates, fungi and slime moulds. He also takes the occasional picture of things visible with the naked eye.
markhortonphotography.co.uk



Andy Luck is an award-winning wildlife short programme producer, and also an environmental photojournalist with a passion for cameras and photography. His work has been widely published, and he is a regular contributor to *OP*.
wildopeneye.com

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Keith Fergus *scottishhorizons.co.uk,* **Drew Buckley** *drewbuckleyphotography.com,* **Jack Davidson**, **Dan Santillo** *dansantillo.com,* **David Chapman** *davidchapman.org.uk,* **Andrew Ray** *andrewrayphotography.com,* **Aiden Maccormick** *maragorm.com,* **Laurie Campbell** *lauriecampbell.com,* **Steve Young** *birdsonfilm.com*

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Ice on the black sand beach at Jökulsárlón.raw



ON THE ICE BEACH IT'S A DARK, SOMBRE WINTER'S DAY.

The grey cloud is low, and the rain is steady, but the muted light is just perfect for the subject matter all around me, namely waves lapping around the artfully sculpted blocks of ice on the black sand.

Now I've seen many images of this unique combination before – it's an Icelandic photographic staple – but there's no resisting the appeal of such stark, elemental beauty. In fact it's a beauty that is enhanced by the flat lighting, a cold scene of black and blue with simple graphic appeal. But as so often is the case here in Iceland the conditions are difficult: apart from the rain, salty spray is being driven inshore off the waves and onto my increasingly crusty camera, lens and filter. So be it, such adversity is now familiar.

I want to express enough movement in the breaking waves to create graphic icy streaks against the black sand, but not so much it just becomes a milky mess. The Little Stopper filter enables me to use shutter speeds measured in seconds, which experimentation suggests is about right. Such rational analysis is of course all well and good, but every wave ensures every frame is different. I'm engrossed, revelling in the joy of photography, and hopeful perceptive art is being created. If so it's Mother Nature's work.



LEE Little Stopper



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Canon 5D mkIII,
24-70mm lens @ 44mm,
4 secs @ f16, ISO 100



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- Travel Photographer of the Year – see the winners!
- Quick guide to using perspective

Sligachan waterfall, Isle of Skye

by Chris Davis

The sun was going down behind and to the right, and the rain clouds hanging around the distant mountains were picking up some moody light. I got down low so the tree was breaking the horizon above the mountains, and experimented with shutter speeds to achieve the desired effect.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 17-40mm lens at 32mm, ISO 100, 1/6sec at f/13, Feisol ballhead and tripod





NEWSROOM

Campaigners call for new UK charter for trees

Led by the Woodland Trust, 48 conservation and cultural groups are calling for a new national charter to highlight the value of our trees and woods and secure their future.

The Charter for Trees, Woods and People will launch in November 2017, which marks the 800-year anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the Forest by King Henry III. The original charter protected and restored public access to the royal forests – this was essential at the time as it enabled people to graze livestock, forage for food and collect firewood.

Today our woods face 'unprecedented pressures' from development, diseases and climate change, and trees risk being 'neglected, undervalued and forgotten', according to the Woodland Trust. Supporters of the campaign say that a new, broader charter would recognise the importance of trees in British society and their enormous contribution to our lives and help to ensure that our woods are protected.

Beccy Speight, Woodland Trust CEO says: 'Our collective ambition is for a charter that puts trees back at the heart of our lives, communities and decision making – where they belong. The charter will provide guidance and inspiration to allow us all to appreciate, preserve and celebrate our trees and woods for what they do for us in so many different ways. Inspired by something that happened 800 years ago, there is no better time than now to shine the spotlight again on the benefits that trees and woods bring to us all today and to future generations.'

Community groups, clubs, councils and committees are being encouraged to contribute to the building of the charter, and funding will be available for events, activities and projects that reconnect people and trees. To kickstart the campaign, people across the UK are being invited to share their 'tree stories' of treasured or significant moments that would not have been possible without trees.

For more details, and to find out how you can get involved, go to woodlandtrust.org.uk/get-involved/tree-charter



©Matt Gibson/Shutterstock.com

Woodland in the New Forest: The Woodland Trust says the government and society need to recognise the contribution trees and woods make to our lives.

The search for Britain's best wildlife photographs begins

The 2016 British Wildlife Photography Awards are now open. A celebration of UK wildlife and a showcase for amateur and professional photographers practising in Britain, the competition offers a prize fund up to £20,000 and the chance to have your image published in a stunning book and featured in a touring exhibition. Categories range from animal behaviour and urban wildlife to close-up nature and the underwater world. There are also two junior categories and a special award for wildlife filmmakers.

OP Editor's Pick

As the entries are uploaded to the BWPA website we will choose one *OP* Editor's Pick winner from the images submitted during each of the calendar months of February, March, April and May. The winning images will be published in the book, *British Wildlife Photography Awards: Collection 7*, and in our BWPA showcase in *OP* later this year.



© Tony Moss

OP readers' discount

Until midnight on 29 February 2016, when you purchase four entry credits on the BWPA website (allowing you to submit up to 10 images), you can receive an extra credit for free – simply use the voucher code **OPMAR16.** So, if you want to enter 20 images in the Adult Competition, for example, you can pay for just 10. Each credit costs £5, and all of the fees are fully explained on the BWPA website.

The competition is open until 30 April. To find out more and to enter, please visit bwpawards.org

Correction

In last month's Newsroom (OP201), we incorrectly stated that the overall winner of Outdoor Photographer of the Year 2015 would be revealed on Sunday 14 February at the Telegraph Outdoor Adventure and Travel Show at ExCel, London. The announcement will actually be made on Saturday 13 February, at a special awards ceremony. We apologise for any confusion caused, and hope to see you there!

To find out more about the show, which runs from 11 to 14 February, head to telegraphoutdoorshow.co.uk



© David Peskens

This stunning shot of a pair of great crested grebes, by David Peskens, is one of 10 winning images from this year's Hasselblad Masters Awards. The Netherlands-based professional photographer, who triumphed in the competition's wildlife category, gains the coveted title of Hasselblad Master and receives a Hasselblad medium format camera. Each of the category winners is now tasked with a new challenge: to create a unique set of images on the theme 'inspire', for the next edition of the Hasselblad Masters commemorative book.

Nikon D5 announced

Nikon has unveiled its new flagship DSLR, the D5. Built for speed and accuracy, the hotly anticipated camera is equipped with an astounding 153-point autofocus system to cover an extremely wide field of view. Inside, there's an all-new 20.8MP full-frame CMOS sensor and Expeed 5 image processing engine to ensure high quality results across the camera's impressive ISO range of 100 to 102400 (extendable to 3280000). Offering 4K video recording and a continuous shooting mode of 12fps (14fps with mirror locked up), it can capture up to 200 Raw images in one high-speed burst – enough to cover a 100m sprint.

The Nikon D5 costs £5,199.99 (body only) and is set to go on sale in March.





© Thomas Vijayan

A swinging time

Thomas Vijayan's image of grey langurs, captured during a safari trip in India, has been revealed as the winner of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2015 People's Choice award. The online vote showcased 25 submissions, preselected by the jury from more than 42,000 images from around the world. Vijayan's photograph will feature in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition at the Natural History Museum in London until 10 April.

NUMBER CRUNCH



101,082,464 – the number of effective pixels in the sensor of the new Phase One XF 100 medium format camera system, developed in conjunction with Sony. It's sold with a Schneider Kreuznach 80mm LS lens and costs $48,990 (about £33,868).

2,342 grey seal pups were born at Blakeney in Norfolk during the 2015-2016 winter breeding season, 80 fewer than the previous year. It's the first time in nine years that the number of seals has fallen, but the reserve remains England's largest colony. The National Trust says the lower birth rate is good news because it means the colony has stabilised – it also makes protecting the seals easier.



227 – the length, in millimetres, of the new Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 300mm f/4 IS Pro, the latest addition to the company's range of high-end lenses for its micro-four-thirds system. Claimed to be the world's most compact and lightweight 300mm telephoto lens (600mm in 35mm terms), it also boasts a focusing distance of just 1.4m from subject to camera and a powerful six-step image stabilisation system. The lens is set to launch this spring, priced at £2,199.99.

145,582 – the size, in miles, of a new marine reserve to be created around Ascension Island in the Atlantic Ocean – an area almost as big as the UK. The waters here are home to some of the largest marlin in the world, numerous species of shark, globally important nesting areas for green turtles, big colonies of tropical seabirds and the island's own endemic frigate bird.

0.7 seconds – the boot-to-shoot time of the new Frodo action camera by Indian startup NexGear. Resembling a smartwatch, the device uses an evolutionary algorithm to quickly edit hours of footage into ready-to-share videos using five different styles.



OUT THERE

IN PRINT

The Family Album of Wild Africa

Laurent Baheux

» *teNeues*
» *978-383-273-2974*
» *Hardback, £80*

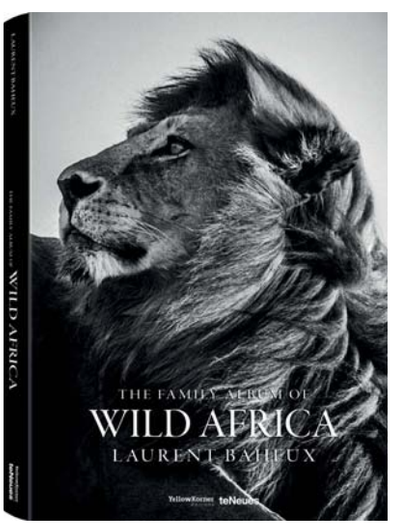
BOOK OF THE MONTH



Zebras, Tanzania.

© Laurent Baheux

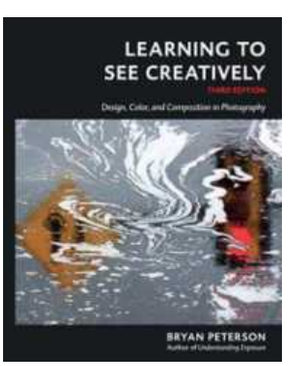
African wildlife is a subject we are all familiar with, having seen countless photographs of zebras, big cats and antelope standing at dusk or dawn within a wide and open vista. Bringing a fresh approach to the topic, however, and one that is sure to stir anyone who looks at his pictures, is French photographer Laurent Baheux in his latest book *The Family Album of Wild Africa*.



Teaming up with teNeues and fine art publishers YellowKorner, Baheux has created a photography book nothing short of magnificent. Large in format and 479 pages long, this monograph is ambitious but doesn't fail to disappoint. With each image being just as powerful as the last, Baheux's pictures remind us of these animals' strength and beauty, and how they need protection.

Working in black & white and with a compassionate eye, Baheux captures each animal's emotion, be it the defiance of a lion, the confusion of a giraffe or the melancholy of a hippo. His connection to wildlife and the empathy he portrays through his pictures may well stem from his activist background for environmental organisations such as WWF, the GoodPlanet Foundation and the Cheetah for Ever association. Since 2013 he has been a UNEP Goodwill Ambassador for the anti-poaching initiative too. This is an impressive book that is sure to spark imagination and appreciation in equal measure for readers.





Goddess

Caleb Cain Marcus

» *Damiani*
» *978-886-208-4185*
» *Hardback, £35*

It began when Caleb Cain Marcus was drawn in by the spiritual power of India during a visit to the country as a boy. It wasn't until 2013, however, when a young adult and distinguished photographer, that Marcus turned his eye to capturing the transcendental quality of one of the country's most importance landmarks: the Ganges. Starting in the Hindu pilgrim town Gangotri and ending his journey in the Bay of Bengal, Marcus travelled 1,500 miles over 44 days, photographing the sights he saw along the way. The results are depicted here in this monograph, comprising 48 stunning colour pictures that do more than just document the landscape.

Leaning more towards the fine art genre rather than reportage, there are two aspects of this project that make it a success. The first is scale. With plenty of low aerial and wide vista shots, the river and its vastness take precedence – with the haystacks, vegetation and people acting as an addition rather than being the focus. The second aspect is the



© Caleb Cain Marcus

BE INSPIRED

Here we've picked out films, books and music that can get your creative juices flowing when thinking about your photography, be it driving to your next location, processing your images, or back at basecamp with the long evening ahead.

Bon Iver



» *Bon Iver*
» *4AD*
» *Audio CD, £7.99*

Justin Vernon made his name with his debut album For Emma, Forever Ago, which he recorded alone in a cabin in the woods. Living in nature to create something special, Vernon's music is not just about this alluring and romantic image, as is so clear in his second album titled after his band Bon Iver. Influenced by the landscapes that surround him, Vernon's folk-style music is organic, rich and intimate.
Ideal listening when driving to your next photographic location.

This Cold Heaven: Seven seasons in Greenland



» *Gretel Ehrlich*
» *Fourth Estate*
» *978-000-720-1908*
» *Paperback, £12.99*

With all but five per cent of its land covered in ice, Greenland is a mysterious, treacherous and beautiful place that American author Gretel Ehrlich has been obsessed with for the last 10 years. Through her evocative writing, Ehrlich tells us of her travels across the largest island on Earth, and the lives of the Greenlanders.
Ideal when on the aeroplane heading for your excursion to the Far North.

Heima: A film by Sigur Rós

» *Dean DeBlois*
» *Truenorth Productions*
» *DVD and download, £11.99*

Heima follows Icelandic band Sigur Rós' tour across their homeland for seven unannounced, free concerts in 2006. Adopting the band's unconventional approach to their music, Heima is a non-linear, thematically led film with beautiful sequences of Iceland's terrain. Footage of open roads, waves, abandoned buildings, sunsets and seafronts are set within the backdrop of the country's wilderness. Interviews with band members are also enlightening, emphasising how their music is linked to self-examination.
Ideal for getting you hyped for your trip to Iceland and to get an idea of the country's essence and the people that live there.

The Living Mountain: A celebration of the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland



» *Nan Shepherd*
» *Canongate Canons*
» *Paperback, £8.99*

Nan Shepherd's short non-fiction book has a different focus to most mountain literature: rather than being purely about reaching the summit, it's an aimless but poignant reflection on her experiences of walking in the Cairngorms. Written during the 1940s, the core of *The Living Mountain* lies in Shepherd's search for the 'essential nature' of the Scottish wilderness and the magnificence of the mountains. Her prose is poetic and hones in on the details that make up the environment. This book is considered by many to be one of the finest pieces of nature writing, and was the subject of a BBC documentary fronted by Robert Macfarlane.
Ideal for when you're back at basecamp after a day's shoot, whether you're camping or in a hotel with the evening ahead.

For Now I Am Winter



» *Olafur Arnalds*
» *Mercury Classics*
» *Audio CD, £18*

Trained as a pianist with a background in drumming and a passion for classical and film music, Olafur Arnalds has created a sound that you'll want to keep listening to. Minimalist yet atmospheric, much like the landscape of his home country Iceland, Arnalds fuses together the classic and indie genres to full effect. For his third album For Now I am Winter, released in 2013, Olafur Arnalds collaborated with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra, classical music composer Nico Muhly and vocalist Arnor Dan.
Ideal when sitting down to a picture editing and processing session.

Natural World, Earth Pilgram: A spiritual journey into the landscape of Dartmoor with Satish Kumar

» *Andrew Graham-Brown*
» *BBC*
» *DVD, £21*

Writer, ecologist and pacifist Satish Kumar takes inspiration from living earth in all its grace and beauty. In this BBC documentary film, we follow him during his one-year exploration of Dartmoor National Park. Footage of the area's rugged beauty and array of wildlife acts as a visual for Kumar's reflections on his reverence for nature. A former Jain monk, Kumar still adheres to many of the Indian religion's principles, such as non-violence and equal rights.
Ideal viewing for a time of reflection before or after your latest photographic expedition.

intriguing printing. Building up colour and contrast over time, Marcus made 20 or so prints of each image, with each alteration becoming progressively subtler due to the enhancement of specific hues. Shot mostly in foggy conditions, the pictures are poetic, quietly powerful and atmospheric. *Goddess* is a book that you will pick up again and again.

Learning to see Creatively: Design, colour, and composition in photography

Bryan Peterson

» *Amphoto books*
» *978-160-774-8274*
» *Paperback, £17.99*

Bryan Peterson is known internationally for his online photography school and tutorial books. Breaking his knowledge down into bite-sized pieces and showing the medium's potential to be fun and creative, Bryan's method of teaching is relaxed yet informative. First published in 2003, this revised and expanded guide has a new stunning collection of pictures to inspire, as well as updated technical sections for image processing software such as Photoshop. Stating that being a good photographer is not an inherent talent but a skill that can be learned and applied, here Peterson teaches the reader how to truly see and create inventive, unique pictures. Comprising five chapters, including sections on design, composition and how to tap into the magical quality of light, this is a comprehensive guide to those wanting to break the familiar rules and take imaginative pictures.



© Bryan Peterson

THE BIG VIEW

EXHIBITIONS



© Tim Rudman

1 Iceland, an Uneasy Calm

» *Lacock Abbey, Fox Talbot Museum*
» *To 10 July*

Tim Rudman's black & white photographs of Iceland are on show at Lacock Abbey – once home to photographic pioneer William Henry Fox Talbot. For this series of expertly produced prints Rudman largely used thiourea, a chemical that gives a sepia tone. Taking eight years to produce, Rudman's interpretation of the epic Icelandic landscape differs from the photos we've seen of the country in recent years. Imaginative and abstract, each picture's composition is complemented by the printing to give an otherworldly appearance. An alternative perspective on a well-known subject, this exhibition is sure to inspire all who visit.
nationaltrust.org.uk/events



© Neil Barr

2 Neil Barr: A photographic exhibition

» *Veneer Gallery, Glasgow*
» *19 February to 6 March*

Highly commended in reputable photographic competitions in 2015, Neil Barr's images have garnered much attention over the past 12 months or so. Welcoming 2016 with his first solo show, exciting prospects are sure to be ahead for this landscape photographer. It may come as a surprise that Barr has only been seriously shooting since 2014, when he sold his web business to focus on a new creative challenge. Two years, 20,000 miles and 50,000 shots later, Barr gives an inspiring story that matches up to his stunning images.
veneergalleryglasgow.com

3 Eleven Women Facing War

» *Imperial War Museum, London*
» *4 February to 24 April*

The first UK showing of Nick Danziger's Eleven Women Facing War, 33 pictures and 11 short films are on display this early spring in London. Telling the stories of 11 women in different conflict zones from

around the world, Danziger started the series in 2001. Ten years later he tracked down each woman he photographed to find out what has become of their lives. Danziger travelled to Bosnia, Kosovo, Israel, Gaza, Hebron (West Bank), Sierra Leone, Columbia and Afghanistan to reveal the hardships these women face.
iwm.org.uk


3
© Nick Danziger / nbpictures

4 Nature Photography Awards: Shortlist exhibition

» *To 21 February*
» *Scottish Seabird Centre, North Berwick*

The shortlisted images of the 2015 Nature Photography Awards competition are on show this winter at the Scottish Seabird Centre. Each category has one winner chosen by the judges and one voted for by the public; you can vote either at the exhibition or online.
seabird.org


4
© Keith Kirk

ADVENTURE TALKS

Tania Moilanen: Reindeer blood and games on the edge of the world

» *The Highland Council*
» *7 March*

Sent on assignment by National Geographic, photographer Tania Moilanen documented last year's Reindeer Herders' Day in Tyumen Oblast in northern Siberia. In this lecture she retells her experience of witnessing the coming together of hundreds of nomadic reindeer-herding families from the Nenet, Khanty and Selkupy tribes to celebrate their traditional way of life.
Buy your £8 ticket (free for RSGS members) from rsgs.org.

Helmet and a Hijab: A solo motorcycle journey around Iran



» *Chemistry Theatre, University of Bristol*
» *16 March*

In 2003 Lois Pryce left her job to ride 20,000 miles on a small dirt bike from Alaska to South America. From that moment on she was hooked on biking around the world. Here she recounts her experience of touring 3,000 miles around the Islamic Republic and how she discovered a welcoming country full of kindness.
Buy your £9 ticket at wildernesslectures.com; tickets cost £9.50 on the door.

BOOK AHEAD

Chasing the Light Roadshow

» *Droitwich Camera Club*
» *9 April*

After the success of his talk's UK tour in previous years, David Noton returns with his Chasing the Light Roadshow for 2016. During a two-hour presentation fully illustrated with stunning images, Noton will touch upon travel, landscape and adventure photography. There will also be a Q&A session at the end of the talk. One not to miss!
Buy your £12 ticket in advance from droitwichcamera.co.uk/davidnoton

The Photography Show

» *NEC, Birmingham*
» *19 to 22 March*

The biggest UK show for the imaging world returns for 2016 with impressive speakers including Chris Packham, Charlie Waite, Paul Sanders, Scott Kelby and the founder of International Garden Photographer of the Year Philip Smith. Gear companies will be showcasing their latest kit plus there'll be a variety of interactive activities for visitors.
Adult day passes are £13.95, to book go to photographyshow.com/registration

The Best of Kendal Mountain Film Festival

» *RGS, London*
» *17 March*

If you missed this year's Kendal Mountain Film Festival you can catch some of the highlights at the Royal Geographical Society's London headquarters this spring. Mountain-focused charity Porters' Progress UK will hold a three-hour screening of their selection of films submitted to this year's festival. This is sure to get you inspired.
Buy your £15 tickets at rgs.org/whatson or portersprogressuk.org/events

NATURE EVENTS


© WWT

Spring Birdwatching Walk

» *WWT London*
» *5 March*
» *9.30-11am*

Take advantage of winter birds nesting at WWT London before they migrate for the warmer season. With a warden on hand to give you tips on fieldcraft and bird identification, expect sightings of wigeons, bitterns and shoveler dabbles. You might also see bearded tits, waxwings and common scoters.
Buy your £20 ticket (booking essential) from wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/london

Andrew Cleave: Birds and other wildlife of ancient woodlands

» *Salisbury Arts Centre*
» *8 March*
» *7.30pm start*

Wildlife author, photographer and lecturer Andrew Cleave describes bird species to expect in ancient woodlands during spring, such as the nuthatch, tawny owl, goldcrest and the great spotted woodpecker, as well as other wildlife, including dormice, bats, badgers and butterflies. He will also touch upon plants and fungi to keep a look out for.
Book your £6 ticket (£5 for local group members) by calling 01722 712713

Trees of Dulwich talk

» *Dulwich Library*
» *8 March*
» *2-3.30pm*

Enhance your knowledge of trees, a notoriously difficult subject to photograph, at conservation expert Daniel Greenwood's talk. Discussing the importance to both people and wildlife of Dulwich's native trees, Greenwood will reveal the significance of oak, hornbeam, ash and hazel species, both historically and today.
This event is free, more details found at wildlondon.org.uk/events

Birdwatching Morning

» *WWT Martin Mere*
» *26 February*
» *Call centre for time of event*

Expert in birdlife and digi-scopes Andy Bunting from InFocus holds regular workshops at WWT Martin Mere. A key member of the staff (he also manages the reserve's shop), Andy will help you develop your bird identification skills and give you advice on kit.
Book your £22 ticket by calling 01704 895181; more details at wwt.org.uk/wetland-centres/martin-mere

Your letters

Write to us! We love getting your views and responses; email claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com

LETTER OF THE MONTH

A monumental moment

Reading Nick Smith's excellent Inside Track article in the December edition of *Outdoor Photography* (OP199), I felt he dealt very sympathetically with the need to differentiate between crimes against humanity and those against our (the world's) heritage.

We were lucky enough to visit Syria in 2001, to celebrate our 10th wedding anniversary. We found a country of warm, friendly and hospitable people. It seemed they were full of hope – a sense of optimism that with the new president (who had been in power for only a year) would come greater freedom and a move towards a more modern state. I'm sure this is an over-simplification but, as tourists, that was our impression.

Never during our time there did we feel threatened or worried – the Syrian people were welcoming without exception. Like Nick, we visited Palmyra, as well as many of the other incredible sites to be found within the country. Palmyra rightly ranked as one of the most impressive, along with Krak des Chevaliers (also damaged) but my favourite of all were the wonderfully picturesque Roman ruins at Apamea.

I suspect my favouritism may have been swayed by the fact that my best photograph from the trip was taken at Apamea (*see right*). Our visit coincided with stormy skies and the odd shaft of sunlight – perfect for photography! Looking at the image now, I can still recall just how amazing it was to walk along the ancient stone slabs, polished smooth from centuries of use and also said to have been



© Lizzie Shepherd

walked by Antony and Cleopatra.

I don't know what fate has befallen Apamea but, being within a war zone, it is hard to imagine that it is not significantly changed from the picture in my head and the photograph that you see here – a record of a time and place, I hope not lost forever.

***Lizzie Shepherd**, via email*



© Alex Wrigley

A bright outlook

'It's all about the light' is a comment we hear a ridiculous number of times as outdoor photographers, and many people live by the saying. Many of us only shoot during the golden hours and deem their plans a write-off if the dreaded low cloud rolls in. I'm afraid to say that I was trapped in this mindset myself, and living in the recently flooded Lake District I was getting very frustrated with the constant dull grey clouds that were engulfing the area, stopping me from making images.

At about 3pm one day I finally saw some nice golden light coming in, and instantly got in my car and headed for my nearest and dearest shooting location: Silecroft beach. The clouds had reappeared by the time I got there, and while I was frustrated I decided I would make the most of being there. The usual gale force north-westerlies were nowhere to be seen, heard or felt. The beach was still, apart from the unusually large waves crashing down. To cut a long story short, despite the overcast weather I came away from Silecroft beach with soaking wet feet and one of my favourite photographs of the year, along with a new mindset that will stay with me for years. I plan to make a print of the photo and put it on my office wall as a reminder that not all is lost when the clouds roll in.

***Alex Wrigley**, Cumbria*

Striking a chord

Just a quick email to comment on *OP*, which I recently picked out from the middle of a whole stack of photography magazines.

The fact that it seemed to be the only one which didn't come in a bag containing some software or other gift that I didn't know I had to have was a big positive for me; together with the surprise that it seemed to be mostly actual articles rather than a vehicle for equipment-pushing advertisements.

As if to underscore this, your interview with Mark Littlejohn (OP199) made me smile: he refused to discuss equipment at any level and spoke only about the important stuff – the photographer and the image.

It certainly struck a chord with me, as I admit I never carry a DSLR, but have never really felt compromised by this. VisitScotland recently contacted me to request permission to use several of my images to promote the Scottish county where I live and do most of my work, so I guess I must be doing something reasonably right so far.

Anyway, thanks for a highly readable and thoughtful magazine, which I will continue to pick up every month, as long as the format remains like this.

***James Cox**, via email*



March's letter of the month winner, Lizzie Shepherd, receives a Samsung PRO Plus 64GB memory card, worth £87.99

Samsung's new PRO Plus memory cards are equipped to store and transfer professional-grade photos and 4K UHD video content from high-end DSLRs, smartphones, tablets and action cameras. With read and write speeds of 95MB/s, the cards satisfy both UHS-I Speed Class 3 (U3) and Speed Class 10 performance levels. The 64GB PRO Plus memory card can record approximately 110 minutes of 4K UHD video or 490 minutes of Full HD video without the need to change or replace the memory card.

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above Marsh harrier feeding on a dead rabbit, Isle of Sheppey, Kent.

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Sam Rowley

Bristol-based final-year biology student Sam Rowley explains how the past few years have brought a huge change to the way he approaches wildlife photography. Today, it's very much a case of far-flung fresh fields and international pastures new...

Interview by Nick Smith

The last time *Outdoor Photography* caught up with Sam Rowley he was still a schoolboy, juggling the pressures of impending exams and university applications with a nascent career as a budding wildlife photographer. Based in Bristol, Sam has had the constant inspiration of living on the doorstep of the BBC Natural History Unit, which for more than half a century had been the quality assurance yardstick by which all newcomers must be measured. It's hardly a surprise to discover that this emerging talent in the genre went on to study biology at Bristol University where he is in his final year.

It's an academic interlude that delivers two important benefits for the photographer, who sees it as not just providing the starting point for an exciting career, but also as an opportunity to broaden his 'knowledge of the natural world as a whole – something which is useful for furthering my photography.' The jump from school to university has also broadened his horizons. As he has taken advantage of living more independently, he's managed to travel to some of the more remote corners of the planet, and in the process he has brought new developments to a portfolio that was once largely restricted geographically to the United Kingdom.

'I'm a bit more of a global traveller these days,' he says. 'I was always lucky to go on cool family holidays when I was younger, but from a photographic point of view these were restricted because we were just tourists seeing what other tourists see.' Sam vividly recalls a 2009 holiday in Botswana, where he really



above Red deer, Richmond Park, London.
Following page Coquere's sifaka, Anjajavy, Madagascar.

caught the photography bug. Only a few short years later and he was to find himself out in the field again, only this time as an independent photographer in his own right. Sam pitched up in the Galapagos for two months, where he worked as a volunteer photographer for the Charles Darwin Foundation. 'I was basically working with the scientists, photographing their work as well as the wildlife. It was incredible because I had access to animals and landscapes that people rarely get to see.'

After the Galapagos came an even more ambitious expedition to Madagascar, which came about through a mixture of opportunism and tenacity. Having decided that this was to be his destination, Sam emailed every eco-tourism lodge on the island asking for board and lodging in exchange for his services as a photographer. He spent two days writing to more than fifty potential collaborators before he eventually struck gold. 'Basically, my proposition was this: I'm a young, flexible, enthusiastic photographer. I can provide photos for your website if you can help create the opportunity for me to get out in the field.' Before long, Sam found himself at the Masoala Forest Lodge on the north-east coast of the island, where 'there were loads of cool endemic species in one of the last wilderness areas in Madagascar. I was there for three and a half weeks, which is kind of unheard of, as even the richest of tourists only get to spend a few days there.'

'Over the last few years I've finally been able to explore the world,' says Sam. 'As much as I love British wildlife, it makes no sense not to see what else is out there.' The UK, he goes on to say, is flooded with wildlife photographers competing to shoot fewer subjects than other territories, 'so it made sense for me to spend the past two summers away, using the opportunity to spend far more time than the average tourist in each of these places. This allowed me to build up an amazing relationship with unique places and wildlife, much of which had barely been photographed before.'

Inevitably, some things don't change and life for the hard-up student is not always a financial walk in the park. And yet Sam has had some success in supplementing his student loan by getting his work published in newspapers and magazines: something he has found 'surprisingly feasible'. It certainly helps when you've managed to bag a crowd-pleasing portrait of a leaf-tailed gecko in Madagascar 'impersonating' Kermit the Frog. For some reason – and Sam is not complaining – the media ran with this extraordinarily low-rent story. He goes on to explain how this, now virally iconic, photo was featured in many newspapers, major Facebook pages and on Snapchat. 'This cheesy story caught the attention of BBC news programme *Points West*, leading to a live interview back in September. Still waiting on those autographs in the street though.'

The bottom line for Sam though is that wildlife photography 'will always be my passion.' He says that whatever he ends up doing, 'there will always be room for it in my life. A professional freelance wildlife photographer requires a huge array of skills, most important of which are talents in business and marketing. I wouldn't consider these two attributes to be at the forefront of my skillset.'

When asked what are the main identifiable ingredients of a Sam Rowley photograph, he becomes more serious. 'Advice I've heard time and time again is that I need to take photos that scream "Sam Rowley" to my audience.' ›











above Giant leaf-tailed gecko, Nosy Mangabe, Madagascar.
previous spread Mute swans at dawn, Richmond Park, London.

He admits that this is one of the toughest parts of the job. 'I have, like many other fellow photographers, struggled with developing my own personal style of photography. Over my 10 years of experience, I've gone through different phases, concerning both my favoured subjects and creative approaches. For example, I used to crave long lens deer and had a weakness for panned shots. But now I look for any excuse to photograph tropical island wildlife using a wideangle lens and a flashgun. I really don't see the problem with not having your own hallmark shots. It's only natural to experiment with different styles, especially when your subject and equipment opportunities are constantly changing. In fact, using a variety of techniques can broaden your portfolio and make it more refreshing to anyone viewing your work.'

For someone so relatively new to the game, Sam is starting to become an in-demand photographer. Following his interview on BBC TV, 'I received a phone call from wildlife sculptor Mark Coreth who wanted me to help him out with his upcoming two-year project. This will involve going on approximately 10 individual trips to different corners of the world photographing the wildlife that he will be sculpting. Something like this has always been my dream job. It will give me more of an insight into what it means to be a professional photographer and whether I can cut it or not in a couple of years' time.'

For any wildlife photographer, the mere fact of being located in Bristol gets you closer to the seat of power. 'I live an incredibly short walk from the BBC Natural History Unit and can even receive three Wi-Fi signals from wildlife production companies from my front door.' He says that the massive populations of urban foxes and peregrine falcons (that form a staple of his portfolio) mean that there's always something to photograph even when he's not on the road. 'The photographic and filmmaking communities are very much one in Bristol, and so I thought it was time to dabble in the daunting world of wildlife film. I'm currently in the final stages of a film I shot in Madagascar last summer and I also started Bristol University's very own Wildlife Film Society this year. These have provided me with wonderful opportunities to meet BBC producers and wildlife celebrities who come and talk for us.' The fledgling society rarely needs to dig into their pockets to cover travel expenses for such luminaries 'as they all live in Bristol.'

Speaking of his influences, Sam clearly remembers looking at the Wildlife Photographer of the Year winners in 2006 and being 'awe-struck by what some people could achieve with a camera. Among the winners, Vincent Munier's genius more than stood out of the crowd. He doesn't just take a photo of an animal: it always evokes an emotion in the viewer, creating an immediate relationship between them and the animal subject. This is the most important aspect of wildlife photography. If people are connected to wildlife in this way, they are far more likely to care about the future of our planet. In my opinion, Vincent is one of few examples of wildlife photographers purely photographing nature to illustrate its beauty to his followers. I'm worried that too many throw in elements of "trophy hunting", photographing wildlife more for personal recognition and congratulations. In Vincent's case, wildlife photography has certainly been done right.'

To see more of Sam's work visit sam-rowley.com

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- Joe Cornish

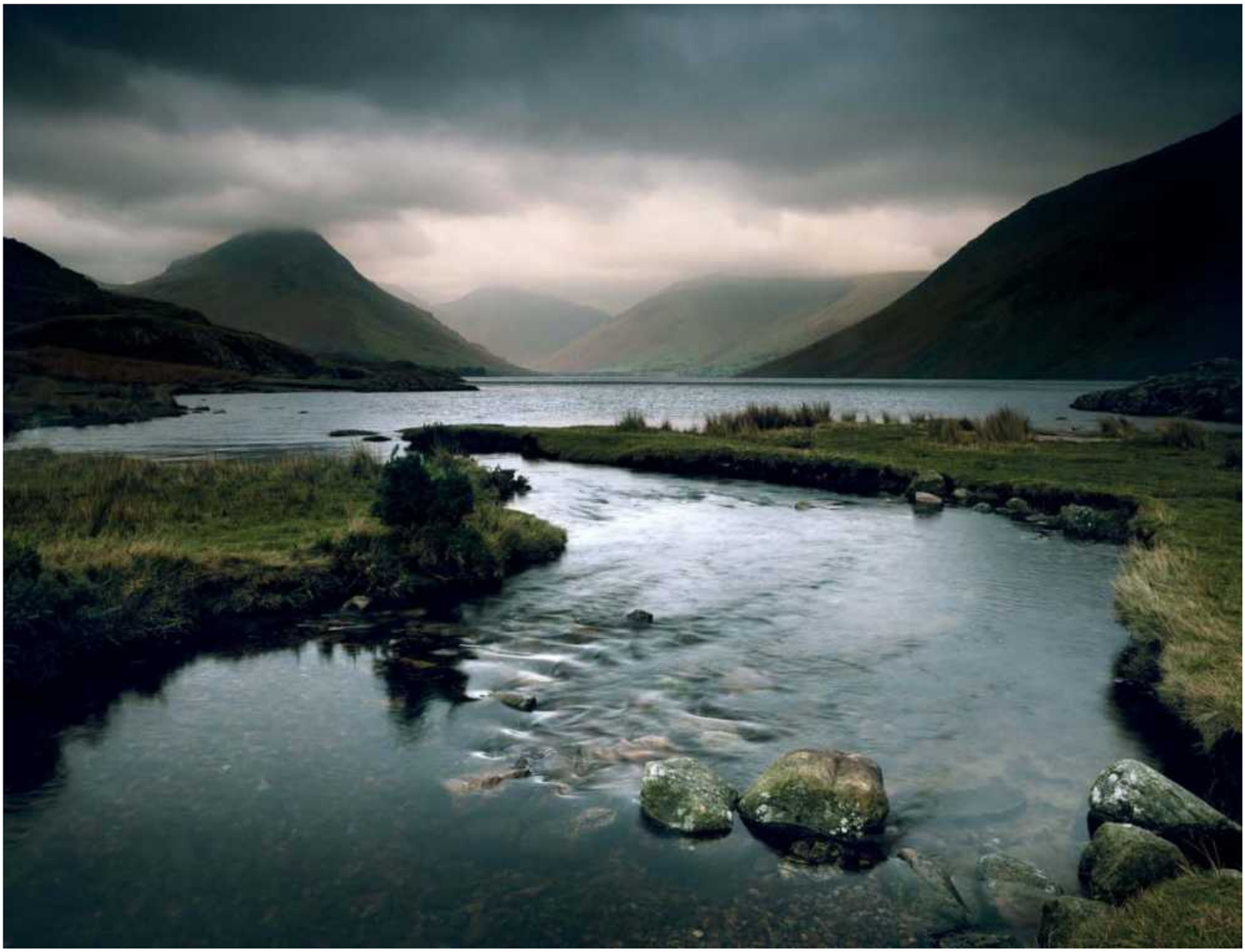
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Introducing an interval, whether short or long, between capturing and processing an image can allow us to approach our work from a more objective standpoint; ***Pete Bridgwood*** *enjoyed a new sense of creative freedom when he revisited a photograph he shot 10 years ago*

There is an underlying common foundation to every single thing we do in life. It's a notion that encapsulates everything about being human, from our first breath as a newborn until our very last (hopefully after experiencing many wonderful breathtaking moments in between). Ever present, yet evanescent and, paradoxically, never more evident than in a still photograph, the concept in question is 'time'.

Along with our subject, be it a landscape or otherwise, time provides the alchemy for making photographs; it offers the opportunity to creatively shape any given composition, emphasising or subduing the dynamic elements within the image. Time occupies such a pivotal role in every aspect of the creation of a photograph that it can be easy to overlook a fundamental truth. In the fine art genre, it is the photographer who always has ultimate control. Part of the thrill of capturing an image is the appropriation of mastery: time becomes our willing servant. Extending these considerations to the remainder of our photographic workflow and post-processing brings the magical revelation that the creation of a photograph is not bound by time.

The perceived value or appreciation of any photograph differs significantly for the photographer and the viewer. We sometimes go to extraordinary lengths to create landscape photographs: locations can be difficult to access, we can invest considerable emotional energy imbibing spirit of place, and our necessary intensity of presence while on location translates into vivid, positive and fond memories. All these aspects of image creation skew our perspective and create huge difficulties for us in judging our own work objectively and choosing which images to process.

For all these reasons, many landscape photographers introduce an intentional interval, sometimes spanning many months, between shooting and processing. The passage of time allows a degree of emotional detachment from our imagery and a more objective appraisal of artistic merit. For many of us, digital landscape photography has been part of our lives for more than a decade. The revisiting and processing of images captured at the start of the digital era emphasises this experience of 'interval processing' in an extreme manner.

My image of Wastwater was part of a recent 10-year retrospective: captured 10 years ago but first processed a few months ago. I've visited Wastwater many times, but for this particular image, my disconnection from all the usual emotive associations while processing was very apparent; the passage of time translated into a greater sense of creative freedom.

above Wastwater, Wasdale, Cumbria.
Canon EOS 1Ds MkII with Canon EF 17-40mm f/4 L lens at 24mm, ISO 100, 0.5sec at f/22

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UPCOMING 2016 WORKSHOP DATES

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22nd - 27th May **Cinque Terre, Italy** **2 SPACES LEFT**
20th - 25th June **Alsace, France** **NEW**
26th - 2nd July **Provence, France**
20th - 23rd May **Peak District, England**
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26th - 3 Oct **Santorini, Greece** **NEW**
13th - 20th Oct **Slovenia & Croatia** **NEW**
22nd - 29th Oct **Dolomites, Italy**
1st - 4th Nov **Lake District, England**



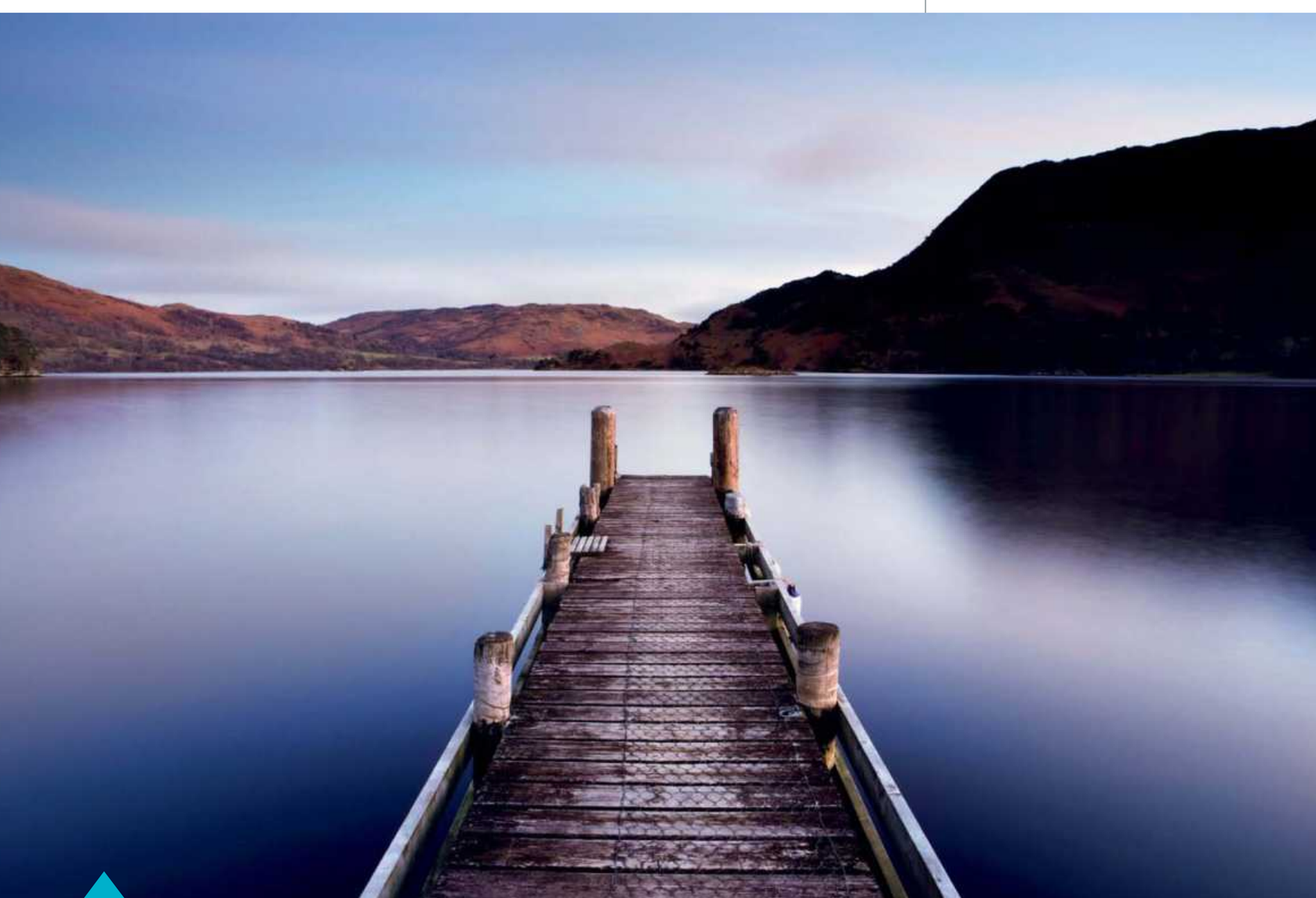
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LEARNING ZONE

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30 **How to master the art of composition**

36 **Quick guide to... Shooting at extreme ISOs**



PERFECTLY FRAMED

Lee Frost on how to compose images with maximum impact

How to master the art of composition

Arranging elements in the frame is simple, says **Lee Frost**; *all you've got to do is learn a few basic 'rules' and then muster up the confidence to break them. If you trust your instinct and compose your images accordingly, then your landscape photographs will always have impact*

If light is the raw material of photography then composition is the glue that holds it together and the foundation on which it stands. For a picture to be truly memorable these elements must work together with equal force to provide stability and equilibrium. If one fails, they both fail.

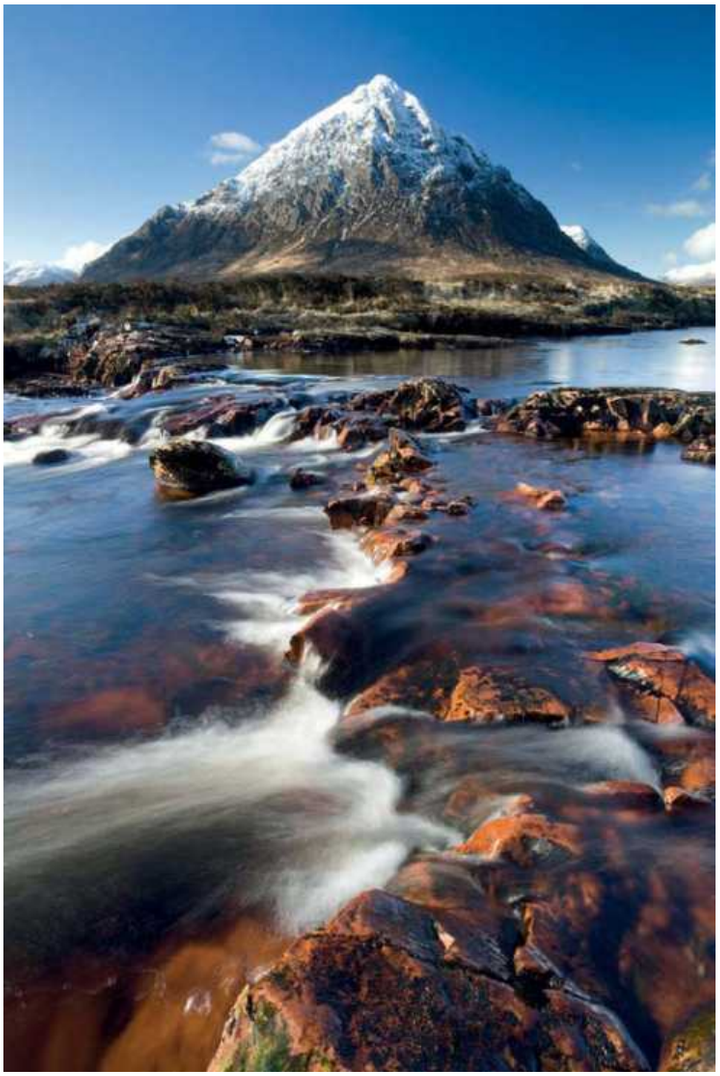
Composition isn't a difficult concept to grasp: all you're really doing is arranging elements in the viewfinder so that they form a visually pleasing whole. A successful composition is well balanced and interesting to look at. It leads the viewer around the frame, effortlessly taking in important elements, all the while holding their attention.

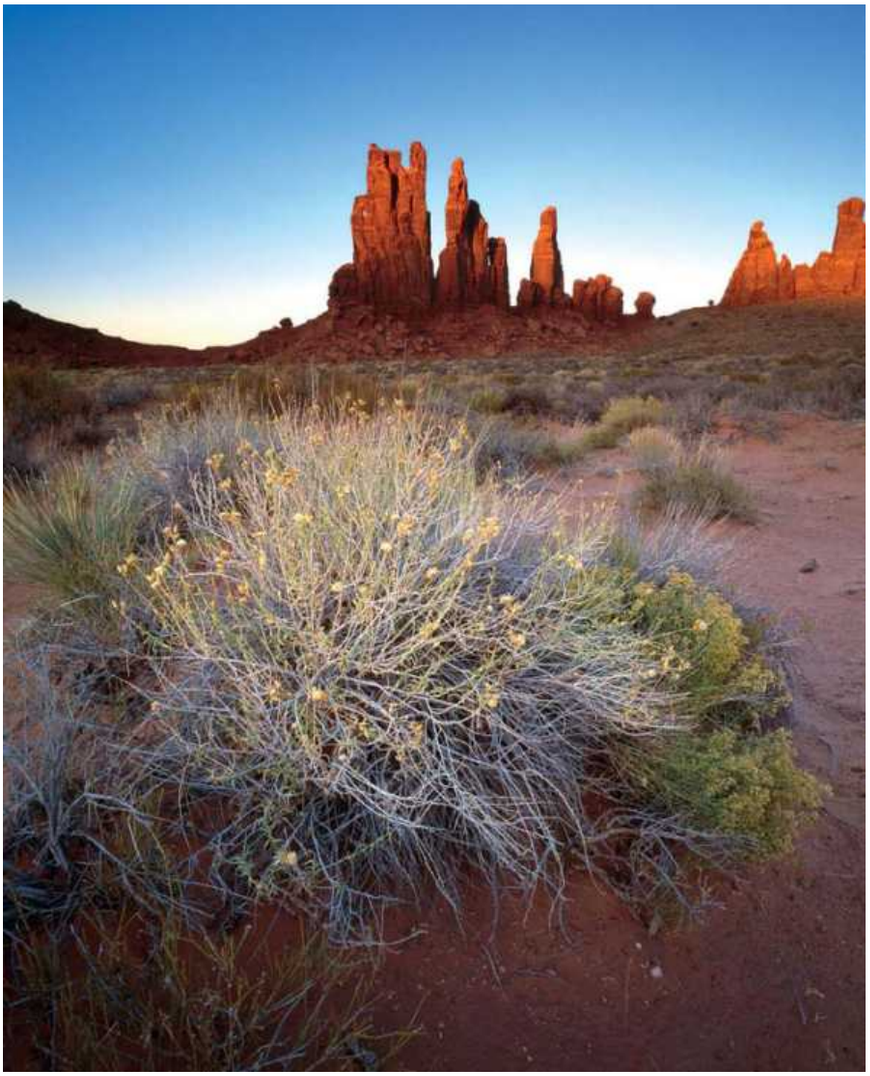
To help you guide the viewer effectively there are a number of aids and tricks at your disposal. The rule of thirds, for example, is a classic compositional tool whereby the viewfinder is divided into rectangles using imaginary lines. Another way of directing the eye is to use natural or manmade lines in a composition, such as fence posts, waves and trees. You can also use foreground interest in the form of features such as rocks, rivers and flowers to add depth and suggest scale. Colour is another compositional aid: it can be used to highlight specific elements so that they dominate the frame, and it also plays a part in influencing the mood of a picture. And let's not forget lens choice: the glass we attach to the front of our camera bodies allows us to control exactly what appears in the frame, and how perspective is recorded. Furthermore, a change in viewpoint can dramatically alter the relationship between elements in the scene.

Ultimately, though, the most powerful tools you have are your eyes, and it's only by using them, and thinking about what you're doing, that your compositional skills will improve.



below Using a wideangle lens to exaggerate the size of the foreground rock has made the distant mountains appear relatively small, giving the picture a great sense of depth. *Canon EOS 1Ds MkIII with 21mm lens, ISO 100, 0.3sec at f/22*





CREATING A SENSE OF DEPTH

The foreground is one of the most important areas of a photograph for a number of reasons. Firstly, emphasising it can give your pictures a sense of distance, depth and scale due to the effects of perspective. It can also provide an entry point into the composition from which the viewer's eyes will travel up through the scene towards the background. In addition, the foreground usually contains more information than the rest of the photograph: elements that are close to the camera are not affected by atmospheric haze, mist or fog, which results in more fine detail – the richer the detail, the more your eye tends to be drawn to it.

The strength of the foreground is mainly dictated by your choice of lens: the wider the lens, the greater the amount of foreground you can include. Moderate wideangle lenses – around 15-18mm (24-28mm full-frame) – are ideal because they're wide enough to include plenty of foreground, but not so wide that the rest of the scene seems to disappear into the distance. If you go wider – down to 10mm (16mm on full-frame) – you can create 'in your face' pictures, but you'll need to get close to the foreground otherwise your composition will look empty. Turning the camera on its side and composing in portrait format will allow you to include much more of the foreground vertically and this can make a huge difference to the impact of your image, especially when the foreground features form vertical lines.

To record the whole scene (from front to back) in sharp focus you need to use hyperfocal distance focusing, which involves focusing on a specific distance to maximise depth of field for a given focal length and aperture. There are plenty of 'how to' guides online (You Tube has a good clip from Chris Weston) but if you want to take the legwork out of the process you can download a hyperfocal distance table from the web. For example, if you stop your lens down to f/11 the approximate hyperfocal distance for different focal lengths are:

Non full-frame DSLRs: at 10mm – 0.5m; at 12mm – 0.7m; at 16mm – 1.2m; at 20mm – 1.8m; at 24mm – 2.5m; at 28mm – 3.5m.
Full-frame DSLRs: at 16mm – 0.7m; at 20mm – 1.1m; at 24mm – 1.6m; at 28mm – 2.2m; at 35mm – 3.5m

PRO TIPS

» Colour influences mood and emotion, and using it well can give great aesthetic power to your pictures. If you fill the frame with bold, contrasting colours, such as blue and yellow, you will instantly create a picture that is exciting and dynamic.

» By concentrating on colours that harmonise, such as red and orange, you can create a soothing and restful image – the softer the colours, the more relaxing the effect.

above (left) Foreground details, such as the rocks and white line of water here, act as entry points leading the viewer's eye into the frame and then off towards the mountain. *Canon EOS 1Ds MkIII with 21mm lens, ISO 100, 1.3sec at f/22*

above (right) Anything from rocks and rivers to plants and fences make good foreground interest, but make sure your chosen subject has a connection with the other elements in the frame. *Pentax 67 with 45mm lens, Fuji Velvia 50, 1sec at f/11* ›

KEEPING THINGS BALANCED

If you want to create balanced compositions, you could do a lot worse than follow the rule of thirds, an age-old compositional device that was originally devised by painters. To use it, all you need to do is mentally divide your viewfinder into a grid of nine equally sized rectangles using two imaginary horizontal and vertical lines. (Some DSLRs can automatically overlay the image with a rule-of-thirds grid, so check your manual.) The next step is to position key elements of the picture along these lines, or at points where they intersect. If the scene contains a clear focal point, such as a boat moored in an empty loch, you can place this in one of the four intersection points created by the grid. In most cases this placement will be far more effective than positioning the boat in the middle of the water.

When it comes to landscape photography, the most effective intersection point is usually the top-right one – this is because the eye tends to scan a picture from the bottom left to the top right, or from the left-hand side to the right-hand side. So, if you position the focal point towards the top right of the grid the eye will take in most of the frame before it reaches this point. As a result, the viewer's attention will be held for longer. Having said that, if you are photographing someone walking along a beach, for example, the bottom left intersection point would be preferable because that way you will be providing space in the composition for the person to walk into.

The lines created by the rule of thirds grid can also be used to divide up the composition, helping you to achieve balance. It's tempting to place the horizon across the middle of the frame, for example, but a better place for it – generally speaking – is one third from the top so that you are emphasising the foreground, or one third from the bottom so that you're emphasising the sky. The same applies with other natural or assumed lines in the scene. The two vertical lines serve a similar purpose when it comes to positioning vertical features. If there's a tree in the foreground of the scene, for example, place it on the right-hand vertical line so the eye scans across the image towards it.

You should never try and force your compositions to comply with this or any other rule, but it does work, so give it a go.

PRO TIPS

» Try adopting the KISS approach – Keep It Simple, Stupid. Cluttered compositions lead to sensory overload, and instead of holding the attention they often lose it, because the viewer can't make out what's going on.

» Once you start stripping away unnecessary elements, reducing a subject to its bare bones, you'll see how little is actually required to produce a photographic masterpiece.

» Shooting in mist or fog simplifies the landscape by reducing the level of detail and giving the scene a sense of minimalism. Paths, streams, roads and fences all work well in these conditions.



below The most effective intersection point is the top right one, because the eye tends to scan a picture from bottom left to top right, or from the left-hand side to the right-hand side *Canon EOS 1Ds MkIII with 24-70mm lens at 24mm, ISO 100, 0.6sec at f/16*





USING MANMADE AND NATURAL LINES

Natural or manmade lines are one of the most potent compositional tools available to the landscape photographer. Aside from providing a natural route into and through an image, they can also divide a composition into different areas, or add a strong graphic element. The most obvious lines are those created by manmade features such as roads, paths, telegraph wires, walls, fences and bridges. Shadows, too, can create strong lines, especially early or late in the day when the sun is low and they reach out across the landscape. Natural features such as rivers and streams, although not necessarily straight, produce a similar effect as they wind through a scene into the distance, taking your eye on a fascinating journey.

Horizontal lines echo the horizon and the force of gravity so they're calm and easy on the eye. Manmade boundaries such as walls, fences and hedges are obvious examples of horizontal lines. Vertical lines are more active, producing dynamic compositions with a clear sense of direction – think regimented trunks of trees. To maximise this effect, shoot in portrait format so that the eye has further to travel from the bottom of the frame to the top. Diagonal lines add depth as they suggest distance and perspective. They also contrast strongly with the horizontal and vertical lines that form the borders of an image, leading to tense, dynamic compositions. As the eye tends to drift from bottom left to top right, diagonal lines travelling in this direction have the greatest effect as they carry the eye through an image from the foreground to the background at speed.

Converging lines are also very powerful because they give a strong sense of depth. If you stand on a bridge and follow the path of a canal towards the horizon, for example, you will see that as distance increases, the parallel sides get closer together until they seem to meet at a place in the distance known as the 'vanishing point'. You know that the canal is roughly the same width along its length, so if part of it appears narrower it must be because this area is further away from the camera. The converging effect is best emphasised using a wideangle lens so that the lines appear wide apart close to the camera, and then rush away into the distance.

left Converging lines are very powerful because they give a picture a sense of depth. The effect is best emphasised using a wideangle lens. *Canon EOS 1Ds MkIII with 24-70mm lens at 24mm, ISO 100, 56sec at f/22*

right Natural features such as rivers, streams and retreating waves can be used to direct a viewer's gaze from the front to the back of the picture slowly. *Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 24-70mm lens at 31mm, ISO 100, 4sec at f/16*



PRO TIPS

» Experiment with different viewpoints and camera angles – shooting down low with a wideangle lens introduces distortion, with features close to the camera dominating the composition, and verticals converging dramatically. Taking pictures from this angle also forces you to look up, making the sky a more integral part of the composition.

» Try shooting with the camera held just a few inches above the ground – shoot blind, check the image, and then try again if it doesn't work out. (Some cameras have a flip-up rear screen making it easier to shoot from unusual viewpoints.)

» High viewpoints offer a fascinating bird's-eye view of the world – you can take amazing shots from the top of a hill or a mountain, looking down on the landscape below. Aerial shots from hot air balloons, aeroplanes, helicopters and drones also reveal beautiful patterns in the landscape.

›





EXPERIMENTING WITH PERSPECTIVE AND SCALE

Although photography is a two-dimensional medium, you can give your pictures an impression of depth by exploiting perspective. One way of doing this is to use overlapping features in your compositions: if one mountain partly obscures another, for example, the viewer knows that there must be distance between them. There are plenty of other ways to suggest distance and scale too.

Diminishing perspective relies on the fact that the further away an object is from us, the smaller it appears to the naked eye. If you stand next to a tall tree, for example, it will dwarf you, but walk to the other side of the field and it will appear much smaller. This is why including foreground interest in a wideangle landscape gives it a strong feeling of distance and depth.

Aerial perspective is based on the fact that colour and tone diminishes with distance due to atmospheric haze, mist and fog. If you gaze across a mountain range at sunrise, for example, the mountains closest to the camera will appear darker in colour or tone than those further away. The same applies with trees in mist, or the undulations of a rolling landscape. To emphasise this effect, you can use a telezoom lens and home in on more distant parts of the scene where the haze or mist is strongest.

In addition, cool colours such as blue and green appear to recede, so they make ideal background colours to objects with warmer hues such as red, orange and yellow which are said to advance. You can make use of this by composing photographs with warmer colours in the foreground, such as a bed of spring flowers, against more distant green foliage and blue sky.

Another way of implying distance and depth is to include a feature that helps the viewer to quantify the scale of a scene. People are the most obvious choice here, as the human body is relatively consistent in size. If you capture a person dwarfed by a waterfall, for example, it immediately becomes clear that the waterfall is huge.

For the best results, make the feature you're using for scale small in the frame and use a telephoto lens to compress perspective so that the large and small elements appear close together.

PRO TIPS

» Sometimes avoiding any reference to scale can work in your favour because it creates a sense of intrigue, which holds the viewer's attention. Ripples on a sandy beach could easily be an aerial shot of sand dunes in a desert, for example.

» Ideally all compositions should be perfected in-camera, but in this digital age, it's easy to crop an image, completely changing the look and feel of it, in post-production. There's nothing wrong with that, providing it's an occasional fix rather than a habit.



above (left) Including a person in your picture is a great way of illustrating how large the other elements are. *Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 24-70mm lens at 24mm, ISO 400, 1/125sec at f/8*

above (right) Diminishing perspective relies on the fact that the further away an object is from us, the smaller it appears to the naked eye. *Pentax 67 with 45mm lens, Fuji Velvia 50, 1/15sec at f/16*

left One way of implying distance and depth is to include a feature, such as a human figure or house, that helps the viewer to quantify the scale of a scene. *Canon EOS 1Ds MkIII with 17-40mm lens at 40mm, ISO 100, 1/15sec at f/8*

MAKING THE MOST OF FRAMES

Framing a subject using features close to the camera – overhanging branches and natural arches, for example, can direct attention to the most important part of the composition. Frames can also be used to obscure unwanted details, such as road signs or parked cars, and to fill empty space, such as a pale sky, which would otherwise dilute the impact of your picture. Wideangle lenses are ideal for emphasising frames as you can move in close to suitable features and control how much of the image they occupy by fine-tuning your viewpoint. If you stand beneath a tree, for example, the branches will frame the top of the photograph, but if you stand in an archway the top and sides of the image will be framed. Setting a small lens aperture, such as f/11 or f/16, will provide sufficient depth of field to record the frame and the scene beyond in sharp focus.

If the sun is anywhere but directly behind the camera the frame itself will be in shadow and may record as a silhouette. This can further emphasise the effect, but care needs to be taken when determining the correct exposure as the shade created by the frame can fool your camera's metering system into overexposing the scene. To prevent this, step beyond the shade to take a meter reading, or use a spotmeter to take a reading from a small part of the scene beyond the frame.



PRO TIPS

» If you're not sure what makes a good composition, study the work of experienced photographers, and see how they tackle subjects that appeal to you. Note what type of lenses they use, and how they utilise foreground interest, lines, scale and perspective.

» If you like an image, analyse why, and try to apply the same principles to your own photography – eventually everything will fall into place and you will start to compose great pictures without having to think about the 'rules' of composition.

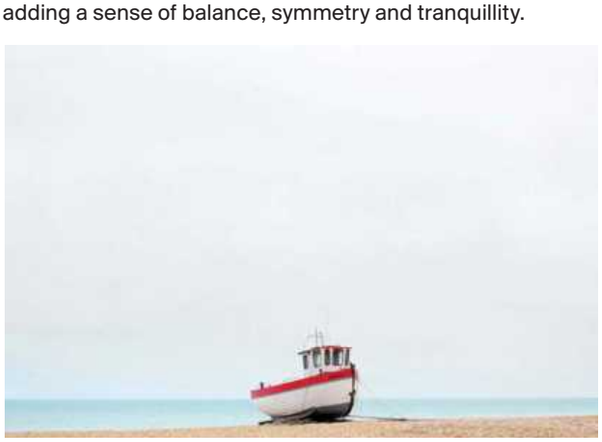
» It's important to develop your own style and vision so that your work is personal and expresses the way that you see the world. Trying to mimic the style of others is a good way to learn the art of composition, but once you've mastered the basics, you need to find your own creative path.

BREAKING THE RULES

While compositional 'rules' can help you to create interesting landscape images, you don't have to apply them to every picture you take. In fact, breaking the rules can often produce more eye-catching images, because the results will be less conventional. The key thing to remember about composition is that it should be an instinctive process based on your unique vision and the scene you happen to be faced with. There is no right or wrong way to compose a picture, just an infinite number of possibilities. If you think about what you're doing too much, or try to be conventional, then your vision will be impeded, and the pictures you take will look just like everyone else's. So, once you've learned the 'rules' of composition, and are able to apply them successfully, be prepared to abandon them from time to time and see what happens. You might be pleasantly surprised.

One rule that shouldn't be followed too slavishly states 'never place the subject in the middle of the frame'. This advice is well intentioned, as it's thought that centring the subject results in static compositions, but where landscape is concerned it can work really well on the right subject, adding a sense of balance, symmetry and tranquillity.





left Dividing the frame in half with a natural (or manmade) line is often discouraged, but when you're shooting reflections perfect symmetry works well. *Canon EOS 1Ds MkIII with 70-200mm lens at 144mm, ISO 100, 1/60sec at f/4*

right We are often told to liven up pale skies by using filters or cropping them out, but sometimes a blank expanse is exactly what you need to communicate your vision. *Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 70-200mm lens at 70mm, ISO 200, 1/2000sec at f/4*

TAKE PART! Enter our 'composition' competition – turn to page 111 for details

QUICK GUIDE TO...

Shooting at extreme ISOs

The latest DSLRs allow you to create successful handheld shots at six-figure ISOs, in situations that a few years ago would have been impossible. **Lee Frost** has the lowdown



Low-light situations are no longer a problem for modern DSLRs, with plenty of fine detail and clean, almost grain-free, shadows at ISO 12800.
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 50mm lens, ISO 12800, 1/200sec at f/1.8

What's the highest ISO you have ever used to take a photograph? At best it might be 1600 or 3200, but in most cases it will probably be 400 or 800. Why? Because in this digital age we are all obsessed with image quality. At the slightest hint of noise, many photographers need a lie down. Noise is a bad thing, we are told, and the only way to avoid it is by shooting at low ISOs.

Okay, I'll admit that 99% of the pictures I take are shot with the ISO set at 100, because that is where my DSLR performs best. It's also true that until a few years ago, shooting at ISOs over 800 did result in noisy images. But optimum image quality isn't the be-all and end-all. Technology has moved on, and the latest generation of DSLRs perform amazingly well at high ISOs, so there's nothing to be scared of any more.

My Canon EOS 5D MkIII has an ISO range expandable to 102400, while the Canon EOS 1D X goes up to 204800, and the new Nikon D5 is capable of a staggering ISO 3280000. Obviously, image quality suffers at the top end of the ISO range, but these extreme settings allow you to create successful handheld shots in situations that a few years ago would have been impossible.

HOW TO SHOOT AT EXTREME ISO SETTINGS

1 Set a suitable ISO for the lighting conditions you are faced with. The 'faster' your lens, the lower the ISO can be, so if you're using a 50mm f/1.8 prime wide open, you can use a lower ISO than if you're using a 24-70mm f/4 zoom, say.

2 The slowest shutter speed you can use before camera shake kicks in is normally the one closest to the focal length you are shooting at, so 1/60sec for 50mm, 1/125sec for 100mm, for example. Image stabilisation and a steady hand will reduce this even further.

3 Adopt a stable stance to reduce the risk of camera shake. Keep your back straight and your feet slightly apart. Tuck your elbows into your sides, cup the lens with your left hand and gently press the shutter release button down. It's worth practising.

4 Take a test shot to make sure you're getting a sharp image. If you are, you can drop the ISO down and try a slower shutter speed. If the image is unsharp and your lens is at its maximum aperture, increase the ISO so that the shutter speed is faster, and any camera shake is eliminated.

5 Shooting at extreme ISOs offers plenty of creative opportunities, and it also allows you to make the most of the amazing technology your camera has to offer. That said, don't get lazy and use it as a tripod substitute – there's a time and a place for both.

TAKE IT TO THE LIMIT

» Rather than use extreme ISOs for emergencies only, put yourself in situations where you have no choice but to shoot at ISO 12800, 25600 or beyond. Head out after dark with your camera and fastest lens but no tripod and capture life on the streets, or shoot town and cityscapes handheld.

» High ISO images often look flat, but you can increase contrast during post-production by adjusting the Tone Curve (or similar) in Raw processing software. If the shots are taken in artificial light, experiment with the Colour Temperature control too.

» Shots taken at extreme ISOs can sometimes look horrible in colour due to excessive noise and poor colour rendition. Converting them to black & white can sometimes solve the problem, producing stark, grainy images that look really effective. I use Nik Silver Efex Pro and adjust the Contrast and Structure sliders to suit my taste.

» Instead of seeing noise in extreme ISO images as a problem, embrace it and make the most of grain. Experiment by adding soft focus (Diffuse Glow on an adjustment layer works well) and reducing colour saturation to produce pastel images with a fine art feel.

» The very highest ISO settings on your DSLR are likely to be labelled as H, H1, H2, H3 or something similar. Take note, they are not true ISOs – in reality the highest native ISO is underexposed to effectively give you a higher ISO. The image is then corrected in-camera.



Shots taken at extreme ISOs, such as 25600, can look terrible in colour due to excessive noise and poor colour rendition – try converting them to black & white.
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 70-200mm lens at 200mm, ISO 25600, 1/8000sec at f/4

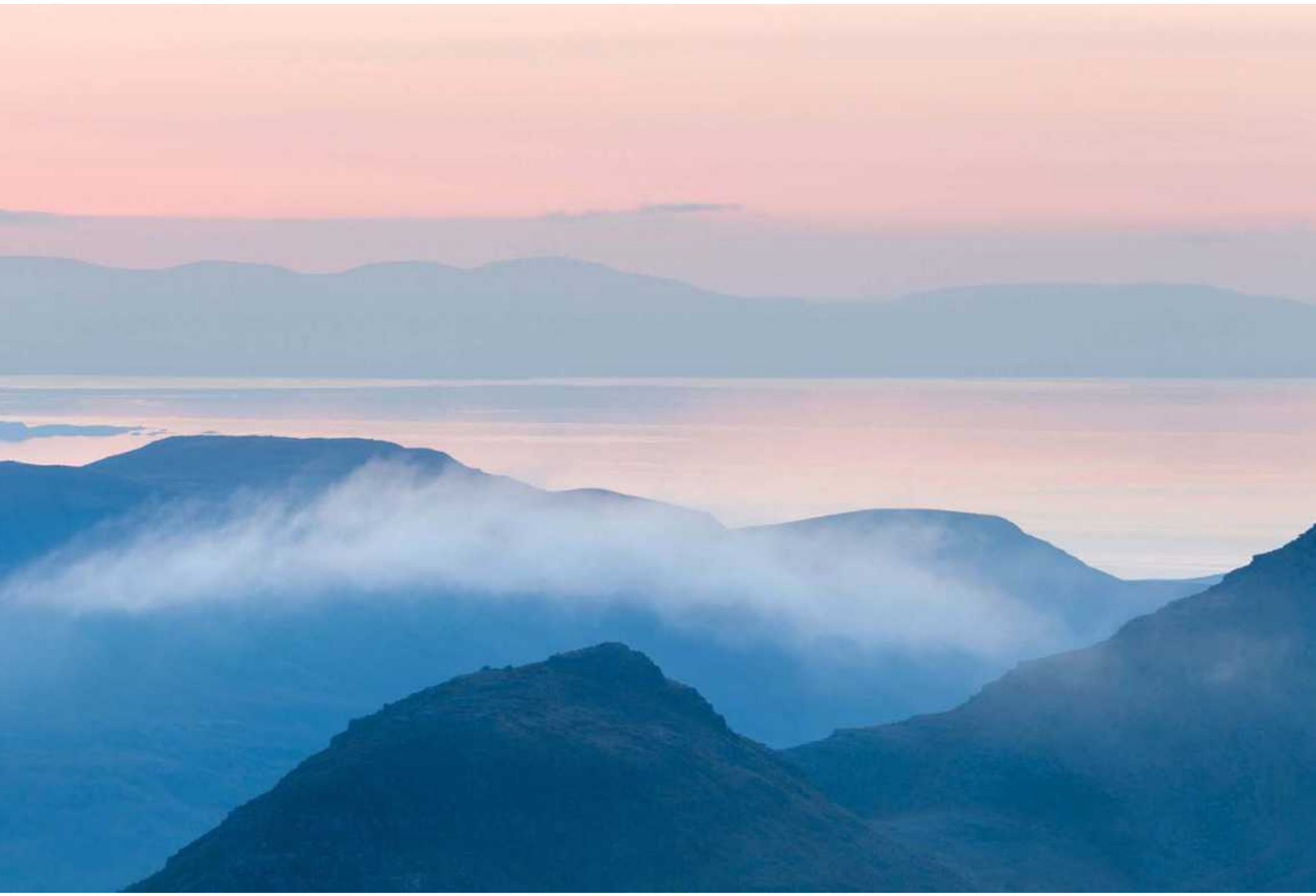
REDUCING NOISE

Noise can't really be avoided when you're shooting at extreme ISOs, but there are ways to reduce it if you don't like the grainy look. The High ISO Noise Reduction setting on your DSLR can be used at the time of capture. Some DSLRs have different levels of noise reduction – the Low setting reduces chrominance noise so that subject detail isn't affected, whereas the Standard setting also affects luminance noise, and the High/Strong setting reduces both types. The Standard setting is your safest bet.

Where possible, it's a good idea to reduce noise during post-production as it means you'll always have an original, unaltered file to return to. In Adobe Camera Raw (ACR) there are sliders for Luminance and Colour (chroma) noise. Experiment with different levels for both sliders, but don't go overboard with the Luminance slider, as doing so can destroy fine detail. I favour Nik software Dfine, which is part of the Nik Collection by Google $149 (£99). I find the default settings do a good job. Topaz Labs DeNoise $79.99 (£53) is also worth considering.



Don't wait until you're forced to use a high ISO (for example, 6400), make a point of heading out after dark with your camera and fastest lens and put in some practice.
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with 70-200mm lens at 121mm, ISO 6400, 1/50sec at f/4



Having enjoyed spectacular conditions in Torridon, one of the UK's most dramatic landscapes, ***Camillo Berenos*** *is surprised to discover that his favourite photographs from the day are those that capture the more subtle aspects of the location*

For me, an occasional summit camping trip to the mountains of the north-west Highlands is a great way to relax and spend some quality photography time; the scenery is truly impressive and never ceases to amaze me. Recently, after careful consideration of Ordnance Survey maps, a plan was made to camp on a hill just north of the iconic 'big three' mountains of Torridon. Torridon is probably the embodiment of the term 'epic' and, needless to say, I was terribly excited about photographing the mountains from an angle I hadn't seen them from before.

Upon reaching the summit, despite having enjoyed many walks in the area on previous occasions, I was astounded by the views. Reassuringly, it looked like conditions were turning out very favourably. Crepuscular rays, ominous clouds, dramatic golden light, a setting crescent moon and clear night skies revealed a remarkably conspicuous Milky Way; Mother Nature ensured I experienced almost the entire gamut of weather conditions that evening, which perfectly complemented the grandeur of the Torridon scenery.

The constantly changing but always amazing light kept me on my toes, and I alternated between my wideangle and longer lens to create compositions that worked in the ephemeral conditions. The magnificent ridges of Beinn Eighe, Liathach and Beinn Alligin lived up to my expectations and featured in the vast majority of photographs I took.

Imagine my surprise when, going through my photographs later at home, I discovered that the shots I liked the most did not feature any of the Torridon giants or any of the other wonderfully sculpted mountain massifs nearby. Furthermore, while I enjoyed the light show Mother Nature had put on, my favourite images were all intimate snippets of the primordial landscape taken during dusk or dawn, with soft, almost monochromatic, hues being the recurring theme.

The image here was captured during a brief moment of serendipity and it is a nice example of how subtle landscape photographs can be made in dramatic settings. This taught me a valuable lesson: an epic landscape does not necessarily dictate that epic photographs are all I should strive to bring home. Perhaps this newly gained appreciation of the smaller elements will allow me to see past the more obvious big vistas.





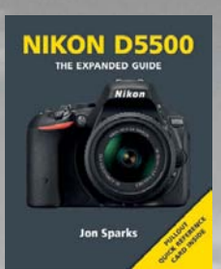


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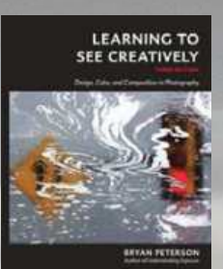
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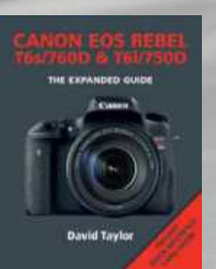
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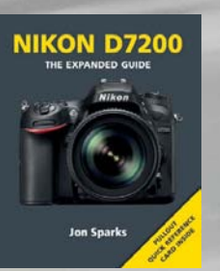
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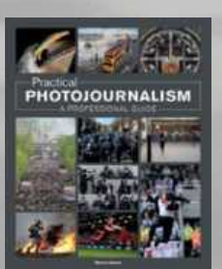
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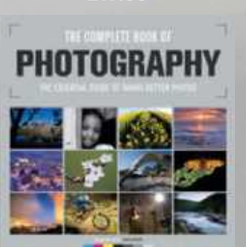
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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Joshua Burch

Joshua Burch is one of the forerunners of an emerging generation of young British wildlife photographers, who brings a fresh creative approach to a traditional and highly competitive genre. Nick Smith puts him in the spotlight…

NICK SMITH **When did you realise you wanted to be a wildlife photographer?**
JOSHUA BURCH Back in 2008 I was given my first camera. But it was a bit more than simply, 'here's a camera, take some photos of the family when we go on holiday.' It was more to do with taking pictures of anything I wanted. My dad is a heavy influence and he is a landscape photographer. Then he passed me down his old Canon SLR when he upgraded, and then we'd go out as a team.

NS **What were those early photography field trips like?**
JB I used to struggle, to be honest, trying to achieve a result I could be happy with. I used to ask myself: 'do I really want to do this?' But then you question yourself, and as a kid, at such a young age, it's very

JOSHUA'S TOP TIPS

» **One thing I never go on a shoot without is…** knowledge. Without knowledge of your subject it's very difficult to get the shot you want.

» **My one piece of advice would be to…** shoot a story or narrative. A story means so much more than a stand-alone image.

» **Something I try to avoid is…** giving up. There's a little bit of luck involved in wildlife photography, so persevering is really important.

stressful and disheartening when you come back from a day out with nothing. But I kept going and, by trial and error, and with my dad's help, that's how I became a wildlife photographer.

NS **But you started out as a naturalist?**
JB That's right. And initially photography was just the medium through which to express my thoughts about the natural world. I was really keen on wildlife, and I remember bringing spiders into the house and my mum saying: 'that's nice Josh, but you can let it go now.' But, really, I just started by taking reference shots of, say, a beetle and then I'd bring it back and look through the books to identify it.

NS **What do you think makes a good wildlife photo?**
JB A lot of British wildlife photographers take pictures of the wildlife itself, but don't take much notice of what's going on around it. With my photography I try to incorporate as many elements as I can. You've got to place the animal in the shot in such a way that it isn't too intrusive and overwhelming.

NS **Not a big fan of the long lens for wildlife then?**
JB I've got to say that in the past two years I've hardly used my long lens at all. One of the things I've learned is a wideangle lens can put the animal in the environment. So if you are shooting, say, a fox in an urban environment, people can really relate to it and say: 'Is that Canary Wharf? I didn't know there were foxes there. Maybe I'll take more notice next time.'





NS **As a native of the digital age, you've never shot on film have you?**
JB I have never shot film, but I've always been interested in it. I remember when I joined the camera club there was quite a lot of stuff shown that had been done on film and there was a clear difference. I think in the digital age it's a little bit easier in terms of editing and tweaking. Having said that, I'd really like the chance to shoot on film and find out for myself what it was like working that way.

NS **What are you going to do when you've finished your A-levels?**
JB Well, hopefully I'll be going to university to read marine and natural history photography at Falmouth. Hopefully I'll be able to become a professional wildlife photographer. At this point I've only ever shot in the UK, and so there is a lot to explore. But I'm also keen to develop the idea of shooting stories about wildlife subjects that haven't been seen often in the British media.

opposite Red deer hind (*Cervus elaphus*), Richmond Park, London.
Canon EOS 7D with Canon 400mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 1000, 1/1600sec at f/2.8, Manfrotto MPRO536 tripod with 504 fluid head

above Common eider (*Somateria mollissima*), Northumberland.
Canon EOS 7D with Canon 10-20mm f/4-5.6 lens at 10mm, ISO 200, 1/320sec at f/13, handheld, flash

left Eurasian jay (*Garrulous glandarius*), taken in my garden.
Canon EOS 7D with Canon 400mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 1600, 1/1000sec at f/4, Wildlife Watching Supplies Long and Low Hide, camera resting on camera bag

JOSHUA'S CRITICAL MOMENTS

To see more of Joshua's work, visit joshuaburch.co.uk

2008 First camera, Panasonic DMC-FZ28.	2011 Joined Cheam Camera Club.	2012 Specially Commended in Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year.	2014 Received the Finalist award in Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year.	2014 Overall Young winner in the British Wildlife Photography Awards.	2015 Became an ambassador for the It's Our World charity and for Manfrotto.

The space we're in

*An intriguing tip-off has **Paul Harris** heading for the hills in Ecuador. But despite his urge to photograph everything in sight, he holds back and simply enjoys being in the moment*



'There's a traditional, and extremely photogenic, highland market about 250km south of Quito that you really should visit, but I'm not going to tell you where it is.' This was not a good start to a conversation I was having with a photographer friend who had been working in Ecuador for several months. The media loves to shout about hidden gems and new discoveries, and my friend was well aware of the case of the now famously overrun Otovalo market in the Imbabura Province. 'You have to see it', he persisted and gave me the name of a local who would be forewarned of my visit, and point me in the right direction.

My transport to this lofty perch above the cloud forests was a rickety high-sided truck in the company of women dressed in all their Incan finery. The marketplace was hidden at the top of a village, which was awash with hues of red, pink, green and blue, contrasting brilliantly against a sea of felt trilbies and straw boaters. I followed the dirt road north out of the village and it was as if someone had laid out a quilt that rolled casually off the hillsides in a patchwork of root crops and barley.

Serendipity, hard work and a sprinkle of good luck play their part in helping us to create successful images, and the three don't join forces as often as we would like. Some put it down to divine intervention, but the fact is many elements have to come together to get us into a state of mind where we can recognise the visual potential of a scene, and then act on it. The photographer Robert Frank called it, 'The humanity of the moment.'

In order to respond when this creative state arises we need to keep a camera with us at all times – or do we? Twenty years of sporadic scuba diving has seen me explore some stunning marine environments. I have taken a camera to the depths on several occasions, mostly for my work with Coral Cay Conservation, and I have produced some pleasing images as a result. But my priority has always been to enjoy the feeling of weightlessness and relish the privilege of hanging out with some truly strange and beautiful creatures.

Diving off the coast of Zanzibar was one such occasion. I was accompanied by a local diving instructor, on his day off, and he regularly tapped his tank to get my attention. A pod of dolphins was among the sightings that day, but just before we had to surface things got even better. Another frantic tapping saw me swing round to see a barrel-shaped

left The landscape resembled a patchwork quilt made of root crops and barley. The farmers on their way home from the fields added a splash of colour.

right By doing a few circuits of the market, and observing the same people, I became part of the scene and was able to capture natural interactions.



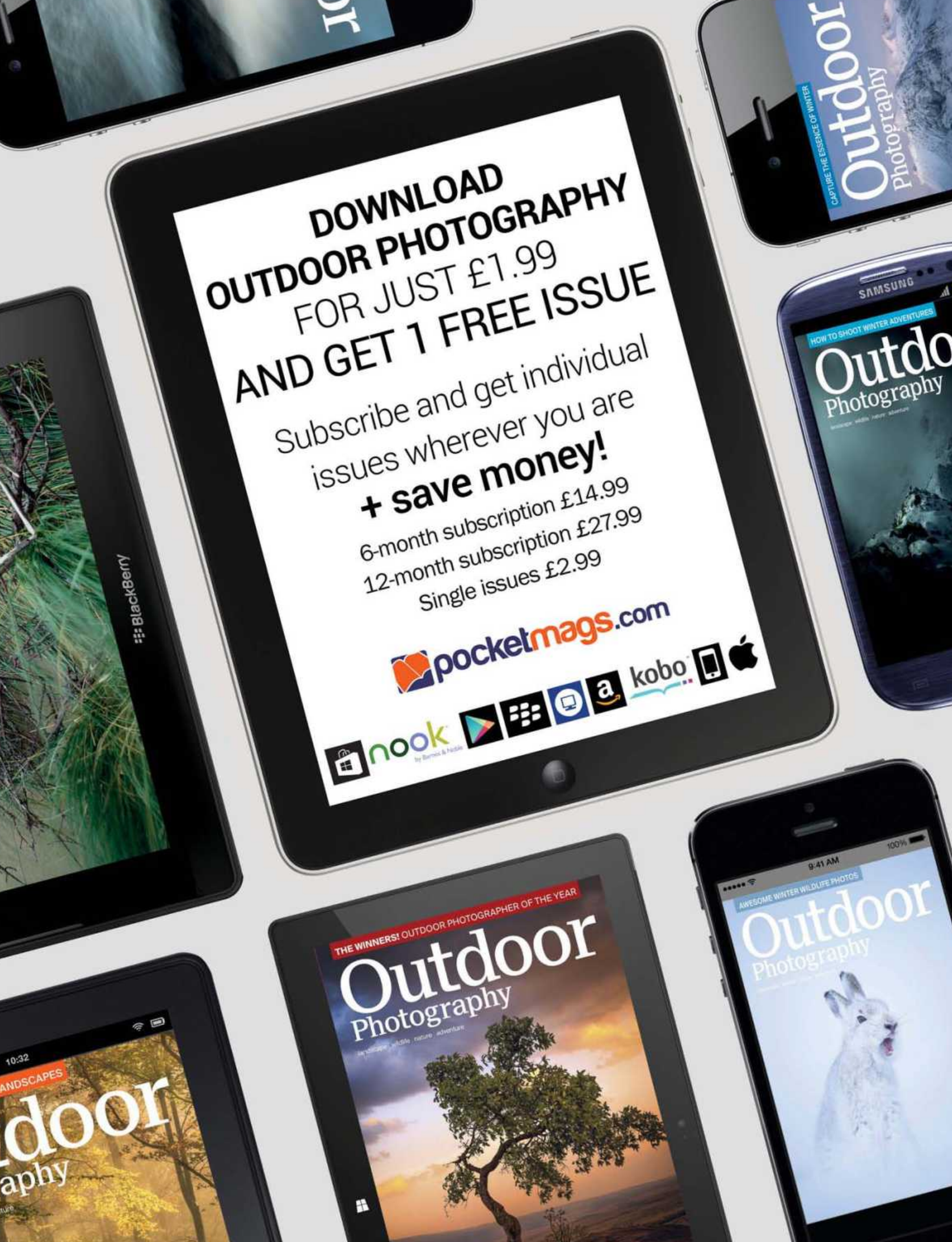
gathering of some 300 adult barracuda rising from the oceanic wall. My instinct was to grab my camera, until I realised I didn't have it with me. That image has stayed with me for longer than many pictures that did make it into pixel heaven.

When such opportunities arise, do we really make the most of them? Do we need to make a picture at all? Is all that hard work and planning just a prelude to taking pictures, or do we have other agendas in mind? I have lost count of the times I have shot as if my life depended on it – tracking visceral light across a Scottish glen, or faced with busy markets awash with colour. More often than not I simply let rip – lenses fly, all angles are quickly covered and, for whatever reason, I'm gone before I've had a chance to truly experience being there. Sure, I've got the picture and it may well communicate to others what I saw, but I often have no lingering sense of place or time.

Fortunately, this didn't happen in Ecuador. Despite my excitement, and my urge to get stuck in, I didn't get my camera out for at least half an hour. I wandered through the market drinking it all in, stopping occasionally to practise my bad Spanish on anyone who would listen. When I eventually got the camera out, I made another couple of circuits observing the same stallholders and local visitors. One woman in particular had previously acknowledged my presence but was now busily handing out peso bills to porters in her charge.

With soft, overcast light, the rise and fall of haggling traders, swirling dust from donkey carts and a pervading damp odour from the early morning rain, the scene had just about everything I had imagined, planned or worked for. If I hadn't spent time wandering, observing and chatting, with my camera holstered, I doubt that I would seen the pictures I eventually came away with.

Yet when I look back I wonder if these individual still images tell the whole story. The mechanics of the camera, and the skill of the user, will only partially succeed in communicating the sound and smell of a place. Perhaps we unconsciously keep some of the experience back for ourselves. Is this a selfish act? I don't think so. I love the idea that our images can reach a wider audience, but it is also satisfying to give ourselves the time to absorb and participate in the experience of actually being there, in the moment.


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Loch Morlich, Highland by David Chapman

ACCESS RATING

These are based around an 'averagely fit' person. Below are loose guidelines to what the ratings mean (N.B. they are assigned by the author and not verified by *OP*. Walk distances are one-way only):

1/5 Easy access – you can pretty much get straight out of your car and quickly be at the viewpoint via good quality paths.

2/5 Some gentle walking – generally less than a half mile – is involved, which may be on mixed quality paths.

3/5 A walk of up to about two miles, over quite easy terrain.

4/5 Medium length hike – up to about four miles over mixed terrain, possibly with some quite steep gradients.

5/5 The most difficult access. Long hike over challenging terrain (e.g. mountains/summits/steep coastal terrain); or involves travelling over particularly extreme ground (e.g. scrambling on rocks/ exposed coastal paths or mountain ridges) over any distance.

LOCATIONS GUIDE

46 Viewpoint of the month

1. **Stob a' Choire Odhair** Argyll and Bute

48 Viewpoints

2. **Glencorse Reservoir** Midlothian
3. **Freshwater West** Pembrokeshire
4. **Invercoe** Highland
5. **Langland Bay** Swansea
6. **Loch Morlich** Highland
7. **Boscastle** Cornwall
8. **Callanish Standing Stones** Isle of Lewis
9. **Seilebost** Isle of Harris



Map plottings are approximate



Stob a' Choire Odhair, Argyll and Bute

*Braced for an afternoon in the mountains, **Carlton Doudney** heads to one of the Black Mount's famous peaks and shoots panoramic views from the summit as the sun sets*

Sony A7r with 70-200mm lens at 106mm, ISO 320, 1/200sec at f/6.3, remote release, tripod, four images stitched

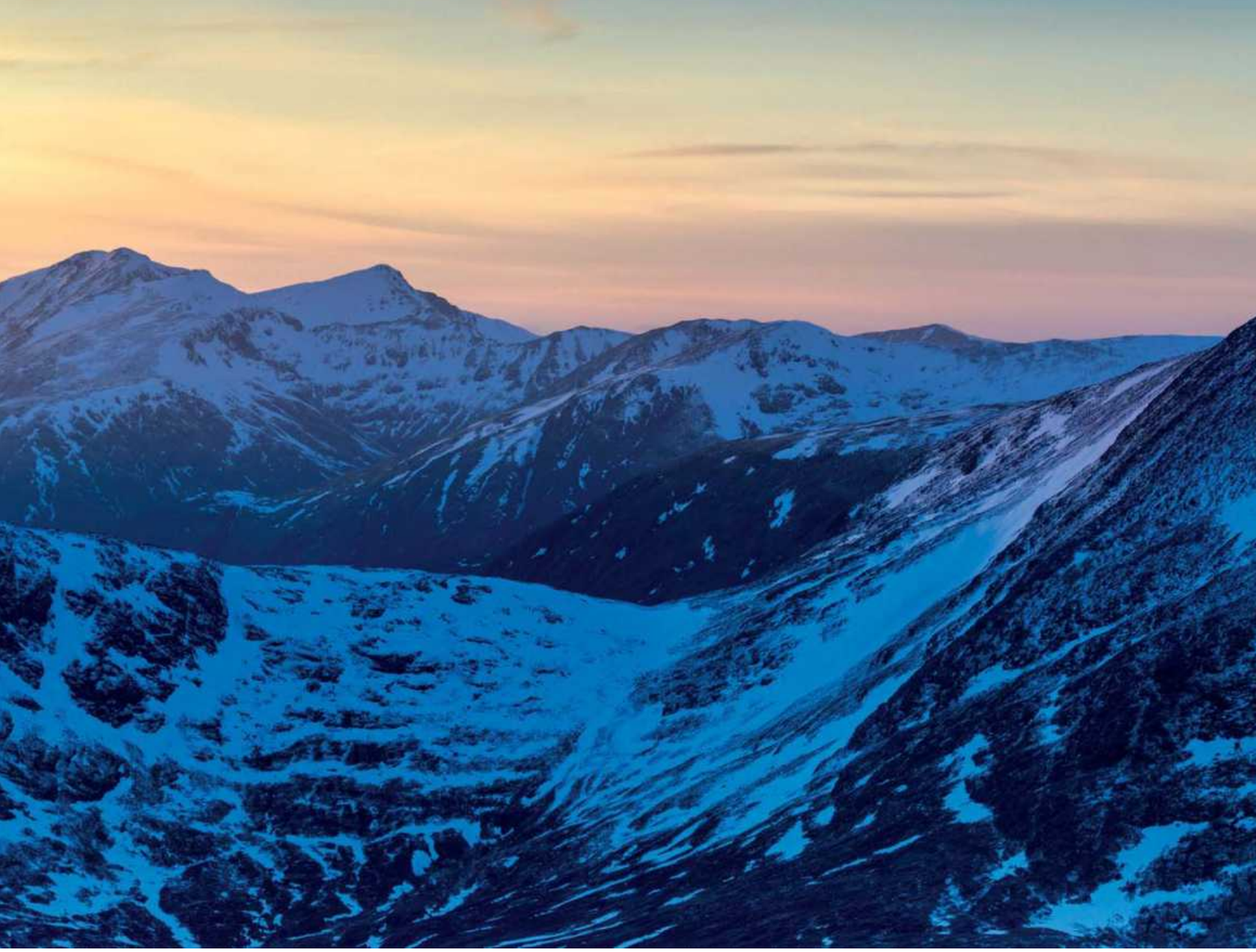
Stob a' Choire Odhair is located behind Loch Tulla and is probably one of the most photographed mountains in Scotland. It is part of the popular Black Mount range, a group of mountains frequently photographed from Lochan na h-Achlaise on the edge of Rannoch Moor.

When I visited Stob a' Choire Odhair last winter, it was a case of making the most of a weather window in the afternoon; this was the only time when the winds would drop to a point where it would be possible to stand without being blown over. I like mornings best, but at least a visit later in the day would mean I wouldn't have to get up at 2am.

When I get a new piece of kit I always like to have a play to see how it works; this is especially important with something complicated such as a new camera or lens. This time I had two new items in my bag – a lens and a vacuum flask – but I broke one of my golden rules and left home without trying them out first. What could go wrong?

I'd originally planned to climb Stob Ghabhar, the bigger brother of Stob a' Choire Odhair, but I enjoyed my lie-in a little too much. Luckily, having been to the smaller mountain once before, I knew the way. On my last visit, however, the cloud was low and nothing could be seen beyond 20 metres. When I reached the summit on this occasion I was rewarded with sweeping views in all directions. Dropping the camera bag by the summit cairn, I put on my trusty down jacket, as there was quite a chill in the air. After exploring the summit and choosing some shooting positions I decided to treat myself to some hot tea. Out comes the shiny new flask but, to my horror, the tea was barely tepid, even though it had been primed with hot water. I drank it anyway because it's important to stay hydrated.

The sun began to set and it was time to get into position. I had identified



a number of individual shots, but from the summit of Stob a' Choire Odhair the views lend themselves to the panoramic format. There was a good covering of snow, so it wasn't necessary to use filters to balance out the exposure. Looking at the scene, I tried to visualise what I wanted to include in my composition, together with the framing and the focal length needed to achieve the image I had in mind. The next step was to look through the viewfinder, scanning from side to side, to work out how many shots I'd need to provide sufficient overlap between frames (about 30%).

With the light disappearing, it was time to head back to my car. I took a different route down the mountain; the covering of snow made the descent much easier, and it is amazing how much light the snow reflects in near darkness.

Like the flask, the new lens – not the one used for this image – wasn't up to much; I could have saved half a kilo of weight. I was pleased with the outing, though, and in future I will definitely remember to try out gear beforehand.

9 miles from Tyndrum | **43** miles from Fort William | ACCESS RATING

PLANNING YOUR TRIP



How to get there On the A9 from Stirling, take the A84 west, heading through Callander and on to Lochearnhead, where the road becomes the A85. Carry on up through Glen Ogle, following the A85 to Crianlarich and continue through the village to Tyndrum and on to Bridge of Orchy. At the Bridge of Orchy Hotel, turn left on to a minor road all the way to its end at Victoria Bridge where there is a car park.

What to shoot Mountain panoramas, plunging corries and extensive views over Rannoch Moor and Beinn Dorain.

Best time of day With 360° views from the summit, there are opportunities at both sunrise and sunset.

Nearest food/drink Bridge of Orchy Hotel, Bridge of Orchy, PA36 4AD, 01838 400208, bridgeoforchy.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Bridge of Orchy Hotel – as above.

Other times of year Autumn is great for the changing moorland colours and lingering golden light in the afternoon.

Ordnance Survey map LR 50

Nearby locations Beinn Dorain (3 miles); Glen Orchy (4 miles).

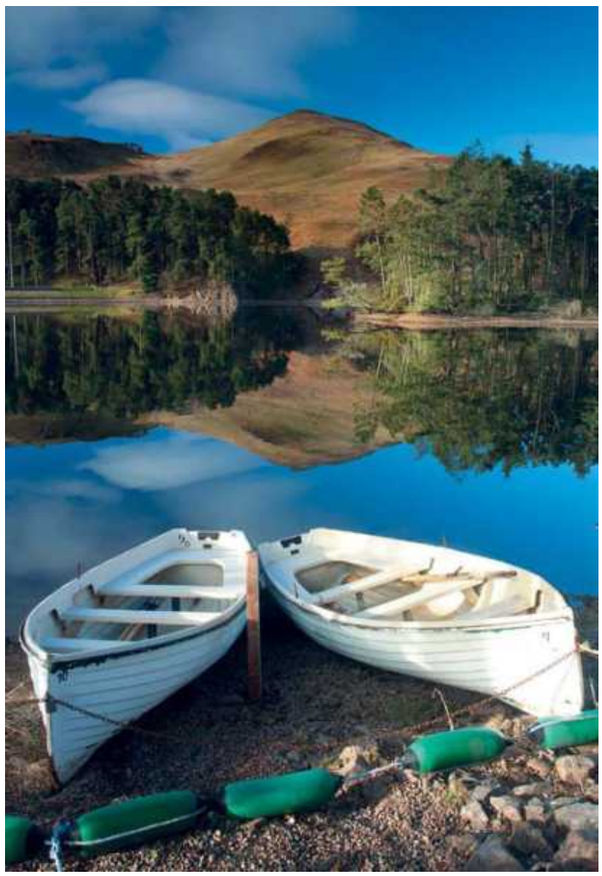
10 miles from Edinburgh | 50 miles from Glasgow
ACCESS RATING

Glencorse Reservoir, Midlothian

Glencorse Reservoir sits in the heart of the Pentland Hills Regional Park, a few miles south of Edinburgh. It is easily accessed from Flotterstone Visitor Centre and provides many photographic opportunities. A wide variety of flora and fauna can be found in and around the water, and the location offers superb views, with Turnhouse Hill being one of the prominent landscape features.

How to get there From Edinburgh city centre, follow the A702 to Flotterstone Visitor Centre car park, which sits about 200m west of the A702 near Penicuik. Turn right from the car park on to the Glencorse Reservoir access road and walk along it, heading north-west, for one mile.
What to shoot The landscape of the Pentland Hills Regional Park reflected in the waters of Glencorse, and the reservoir's wildlife.
Best time of day Early to mid-morning is best during March.
Nearest food/drink The Flotterstone Inn Hotel, Milton Bridge near Penicuik, EH26 0PP, 01968 320759, flotterstoneinn.com.
Nearest accommodation The Riccarton Inn, Currie, EH14 5NX, 0131 4492230, riccartoninn.co.uk.
Other times of year Winter can bring snow and ice to the Pentland Hills Regional Park, which can be superb.
Ordnance Survey map LR 66
Nearby locations The Water of Leith, Colinton (5.5 miles); Blackford Hill (7 miles).




© Keith Fergus

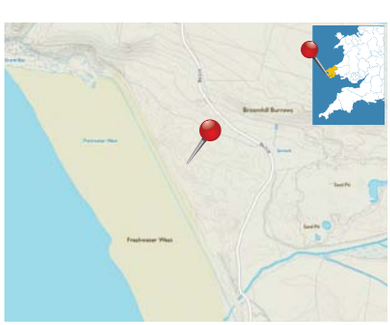
8.5 miles from Pembroke | 70 miles from Swansea ACCESS RATING

Freshwater West, Pembrokeshire

Freshwater West lies on the coast of south-west Pembrokeshire and is a very popular spot for surfers; it has big waves thanks to the Atlantic Ocean rolling in. The wide, sandy beach is backed by an impressive system of sand dunes. There's a rocky reef at the southern end and some quiet bays at the other. The beach has featured in various films, including *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* and Ridley Scott's *Robin Hood*. Keep an eye on the tides, as the water comes in fast here.

How to get there From Pembroke, head south-east on the A4139. After passing the school, turn left on to St Daniels Hill (the B4319, which becomes the B4320). Follow this road for the next seven miles and turn left after a small cottage on the B4319 down towards the beach car parks.
What to shoot The vast beach, rock formations and rockpools. Amazing lunar landscapes, with large sand dunes covered in marram grass. Head north from the beach, via the coast path, for different views.
Best time of day Late afternoon and evening, as the beach faces west. Any time of day for abstracts. The sun will set into the sea all year round, except peak summertime.
Nearest food/drink Speculation Inn, Hundleton, SA71 5RU, 01646 661306.
Nearest accommodation Highgate Inn, Hundleton, SA71 5RD, 01646 685904, highgateinn.co.uk.
Other times of year In summer it's usually serene and peaceful with pastel skies, but Atlantic storms can smash head first into this corner of Wales. Expect spectacular waves and windswept grassland.
Ordnance Survey map OL 36
Nearby locations Green Bridge of Wales (4 miles); Bosherston Lily Ponds (8 miles).


© Drew Buckley





© Jack Davidson

Invercoe, Highland

Glencoe is well known to hillwalkers and photographers alike, but for the latter the attractions extend well beyond the glen itself. In particular, the B863, which loops round the fjord-like Loch Leven from Glencoe Village, provides easy access to many beautiful viewpoints, the first of which is located just before the bridge over the River Coe at Invercoe. For the more energetic, the steep path from Kinlochleven to the Mamore range and Loch Eilde Mor provides unsurpassed views of Loch Leven.

How to get there From Fort William, take the A82 south for 12 miles to cross the Ballachulish Bridge over Loch Leven. Continue east on the A82 for three miles to Glencoe Village and turn left on to the B863 for Kinlochleven. Park at the side of the road, 500 yards further on and before the bridge over the River Coe.



What to shoot Views west along Loch Leven, towards the mountains of Ardgour, with Garbh Bheinn (the rough mountain) prominent on the horizon. Beinn a' Bheithir, rising above the village of Ballachulish, also provides a scenic backdrop. Otters and many species of waterfowl and seabird frequent the loch.
Best time of day Late afternoon and evening, as the sun sets over the mountains of Ardgour.
Nearest food/drink The Glencoe Inn, Glencoe Village, PH49 4HP, 0844 9506282, crerarhotels.com/the-glencoe-inn.
Nearest accommodation The Glencoe Inn (see above) and numerous B&B places in Glencoe Village.
Other times of year Late October provides wonderful autumn colours around Loch Leven, while winter provides spectacular views of snowcapped peaks from Invercoe and nearby locations.
Ordnance Survey map LR 41
Nearby locations The Hospital Lochan (1 mile); the Lost Valley/Allt Coire Gabhail (6.5 miles).

15 miles from Fort William | 92 miles from Glasgow ACCESS RATING

0.5 miles from Mumbles | 5 miles from Swansea ACCESS RATING

Langland Bay, Swansea

Langland Bay is a popular beach on the Gower Peninsula just outside of Mumbles. With the coast path either side and facing south, it offers numerous photographic opportunities throughout the year. Famous for its iconic green and white beach huts, the beach is also very popular with surfers.

How to get there Take the A4067 out of Swansea into Mumbles. Turn right on to Newton Road and then left at the traffic lights (signposted Langland Bay). Just before the Langland Bay road, turn on to the Rotherslade road and find somewhere to park. Walk to the coast path and turn left – there are plenty of viewpoints looking towards the bay.



© Dan Santillo

What to shoot Coastal scenes, breaking waves, beach huts and, if you're lucky, grey seals.
Best time of day Sunset or sunrise.
Nearest food/drink Langland's Brasserie, The Seafront, Brynfield Road, Swansea, SA3 4SQ, 01792 363699, langlandsbrasserie.co.uk.
Nearest accommodation Langland Bay House B&B, 27 Langland Bay Road, Swansea, SA3 4QP, 01792 367241, langlandbayhouse.com.
Other times of year Any time of year.
Ordnance Survey map Explorer 164
Nearby locations Bracelet Bay (2 miles); Caswell Bay (2 miles).



Loch Morlich, Highland

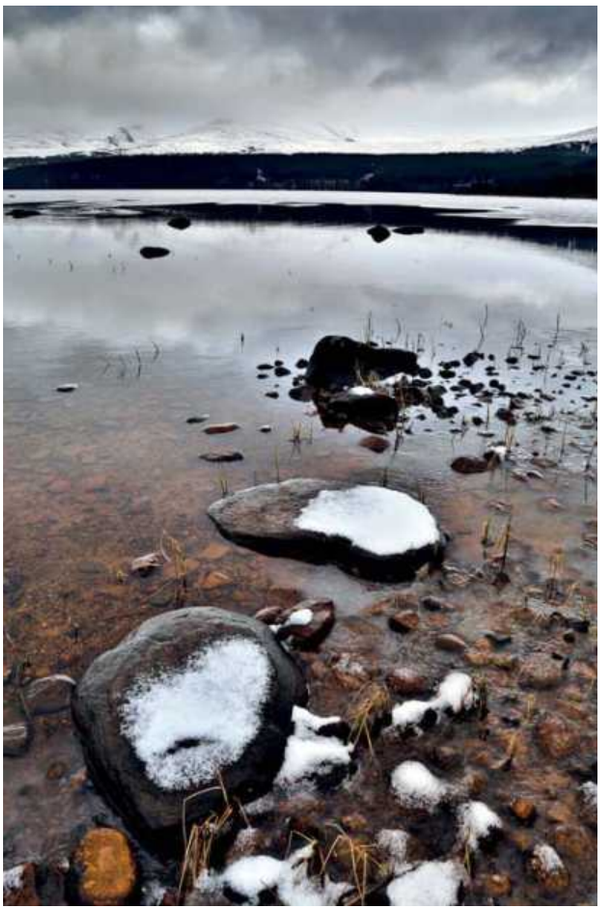
Loch Morlich is a large loch surrounded by trees and the peaks of the Cairngorm mountain range. The spirit and atmosphere of the location vary greatly, from idyllic to inhospitable at the whim of the weather. The sky can play a large part in the success of an image, both above the mountains and in the reflection.

How to get there From Aviemore, take the B970 and follow signs for the Cairngorm ski centre. Park on the right-hand side of the road as soon as you see Loch Morlich. Take the bridge over the river and explore the shore of the loch.



What to shoot The peaks of the Cairngorm range dominate the skyline from here, so use these as a focal point and look for reflections, stones, trees or rushes for foreground interest.
Best time of day Late afternoon, as the hills face west. Calm early mornings can also be great.
Nearest food/drink Glenmore Café, Glenmore Campsite, PH22 1QU, 01479 861253, sledges.co.uk/content/8-glenmore-cafe-aviemore.
Nearest accommodation Cairngorm Guesthouse, Aviemore, PH22 1RP, 01479 810630, cairngormguesthouse.com.
Other times of year Autumn.
Ordnance Survey map LR 36
Nearby locations Cairngorm mountain and ski centre (4 miles); Loch an Eilein (6 miles).

5 miles from Aviemore | 35 miles from Inverness
ACCESS RATING


© David Chapman

14 miles from Bude | 42 miles from Truro
ACCESS RATING

Boscastle, Cornwall

Boscastle was headline news in August 2004, when it was devastated by a flash flood. Thankfully, the outer harbour survived relatively intact and remains one of the best photographic locations on the Cornish coast. In early spring, stunning views of the sun setting out to sea can be captured from the South West Coast Path.

How to get there From the Kennards House junction on the A30 (three miles west of Launceston), take the A395, signed Wadebridge and Camelford. In the village of Hallworthy (eight miles), turn right on to the B3262, following this for two miles, before turning right on to the A39. After three miles, turn left to follow the B3263 to Boscastle (four miles). Park in the large pay and display car park; from here it's a short downhill walk to the harbour (one quarter of a mile).



What to shoot The picturesque medieval harbour in its spectacular coastal location, the unspoilt village and fishing boats.
Best time of day Sunset is particularly good at the location.
Nearest food/drink National Trust Café, The Harbour, Boscastle, PL35 OHD, 01840 250353, nationaltrust.org.uk/boscastle.
Nearest accommodation The Riverside, The Bridge, Boscastle, PL35 0HE, 01840 250216, hotelriverside.co.uk.
Other times of year The sun sets in a similar position in the autumn.
Ordnance Survey map LR 190
Nearby locations St Nectans Glen (2 miles); Trebarwith Strand (6 miles).



© Andrew Ray

Callanish Standing Stones, Isle of Lewis



The Callanish Standing Stones form an impressive neolithic archaeological site on the west coast of Lewis. The main stone circle consists of 13 large stones reaching up to 4m in height. The site is free to enter and can be accessed at any time of day or night. With almost no light pollution, it is an ideal location for astrophotography, with the standing stones providing a stunning foreground. Being this far north also increases your chances of capturing the northern lights.

How to get there From Stornoway, take the A859 west for about six miles until you reach Luirbost, then take the A858, signposted 'Callanish Stones Visitor Centre', for a further 10 miles. Follow signs for the visitor centre and park as indicated. The stones are located about 300m along a good track leading north from the visitor centre.

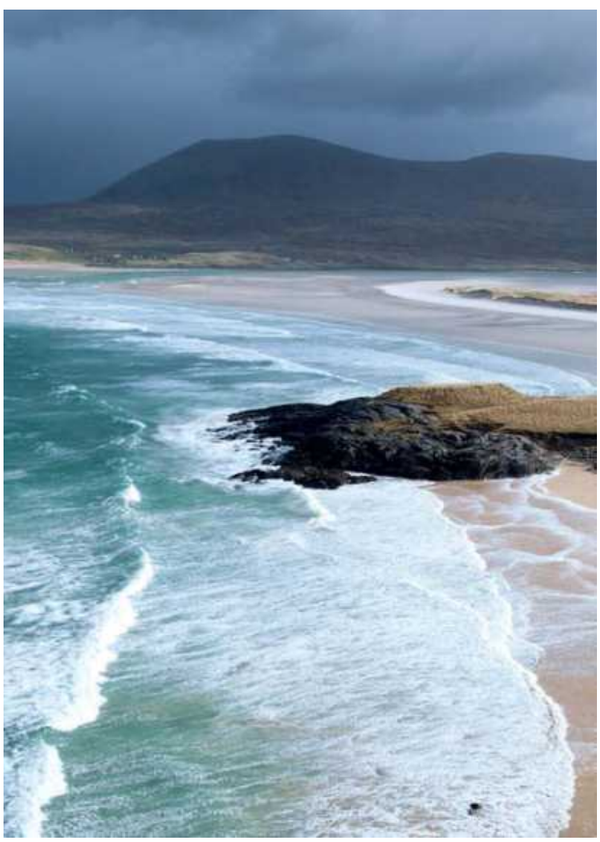


What to shoot Standing stones, stars and the northern lights.
Best time of day Any time of day or night.
Nearest food/drink Calanais Visitor Centre, Calanais, Isle of Lewis, HS2 9DY, 01851 621422, callanishvisitorcentre.co.uk.
Nearest accommodation Eshcol Guest House, Breasclete, Isle of Lewis, Western Isles, 01851 621 771, eshcol.com.
Other times of year Summer for the Milky Way over the stones.
Ordnance Survey map LR 8
Nearby locations Carloway broch (7 miles); Dalmore beach (9 miles).

© Aidan Maccormick

17 miles from Stornoway | 127 miles from Inverness ACCESS RATING

9 miles from Leverburgh | 45 miles from Stornoway ACCESS RATING



© Aidan Maccormick

Seilebost, Isle of Harris

Seilebost is a long beach and sand dune system on the west coast of the Isle of Harris. The shallow, sloping beach of fine pale sand is exposed to the full force of the prevailing westerly winds. Around the spring equinox the weather becomes increasingly dynamic as squally showers whip over the site, alternating with periods of serene turquoise waters and blue skies.

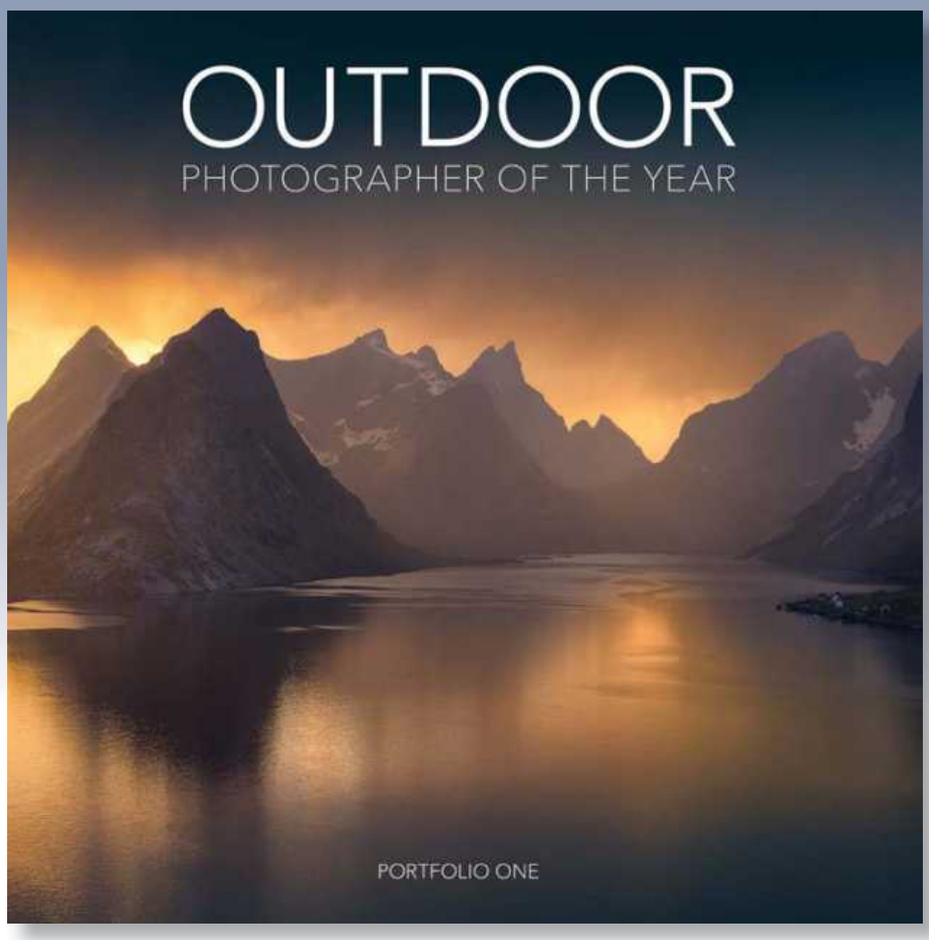
How to get there From Leverburgh, take the A859 north for about nine miles. After passing the Horgabost campsite on your left, park in the lay-by at the top of the hill. From here there are excellent views down to Seilebost and beyond to Luskentyre and the Isle of Taransay. You can also explore the beach and sand dunes by walking a further 300m down the road and entering through the metal gate by the small burn. Please respect the private houses, cultivated areas and livestock.
What to shoot Sweeping golden beaches, turquoise seas and crashing waves.
Best time of day Any time of day.
Nearest food/drink Temple Café, 41 Northton, Isle of Harris, HS3 3JA, 07876 340416, facebook.com/TheTempleCafe. Open from spring until late autumn.
Nearest accommodation Am Bothan (bunkhouse), Ferry Road, Leverburgh, Isle of Harris, HS5 3UA, 01859 520251, ambothan.com.
Other times of year Early summer for wildflowers on the machair grasslands.
Ordnance Survey map LR 18
Nearby locations Luskentyre (4 miles); Scarista (6 miles).



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Outdoor Photographer of the year

IN ASSOCIATION WITH FJÄLL RÄVEN



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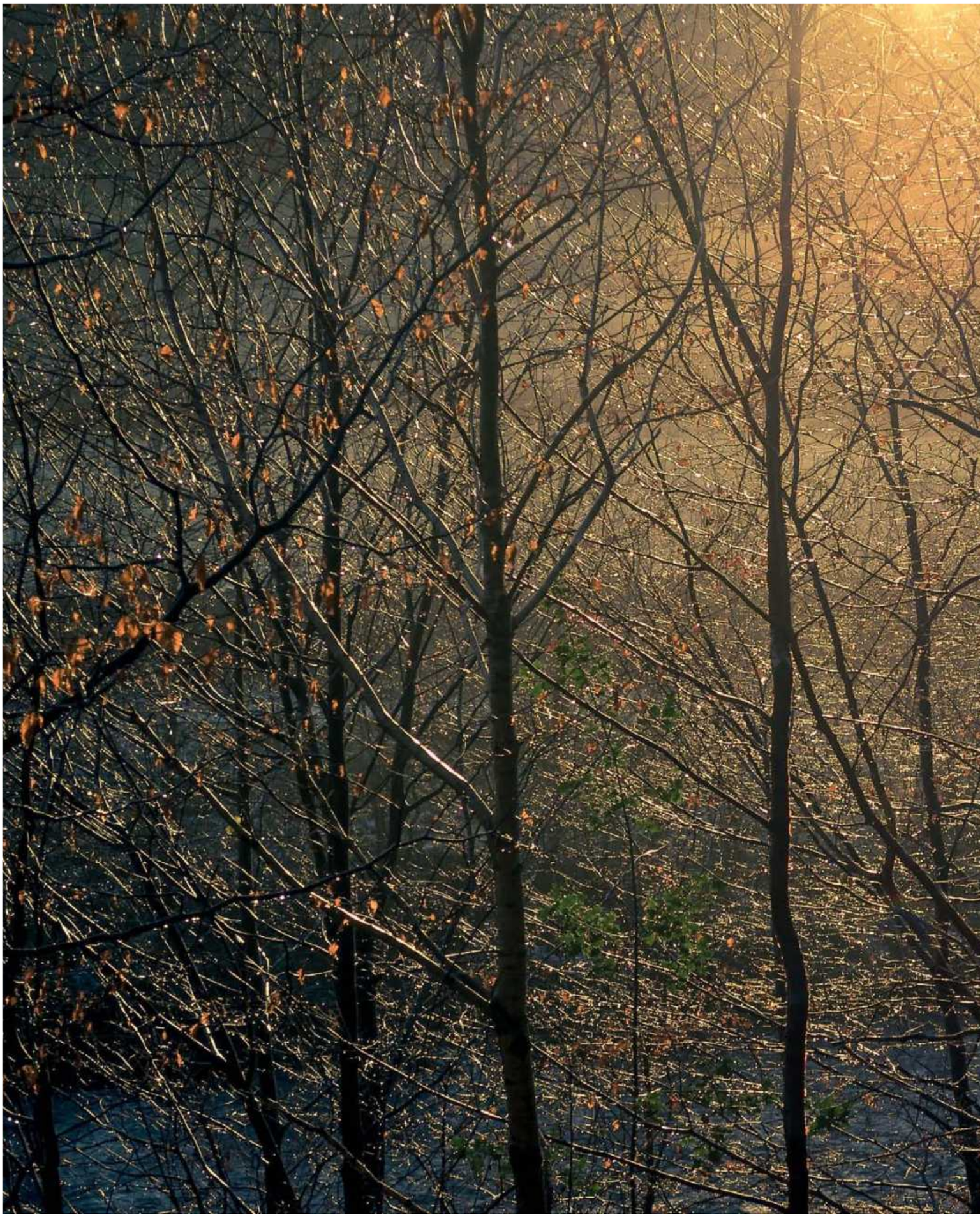
CATEGORY WINNERS

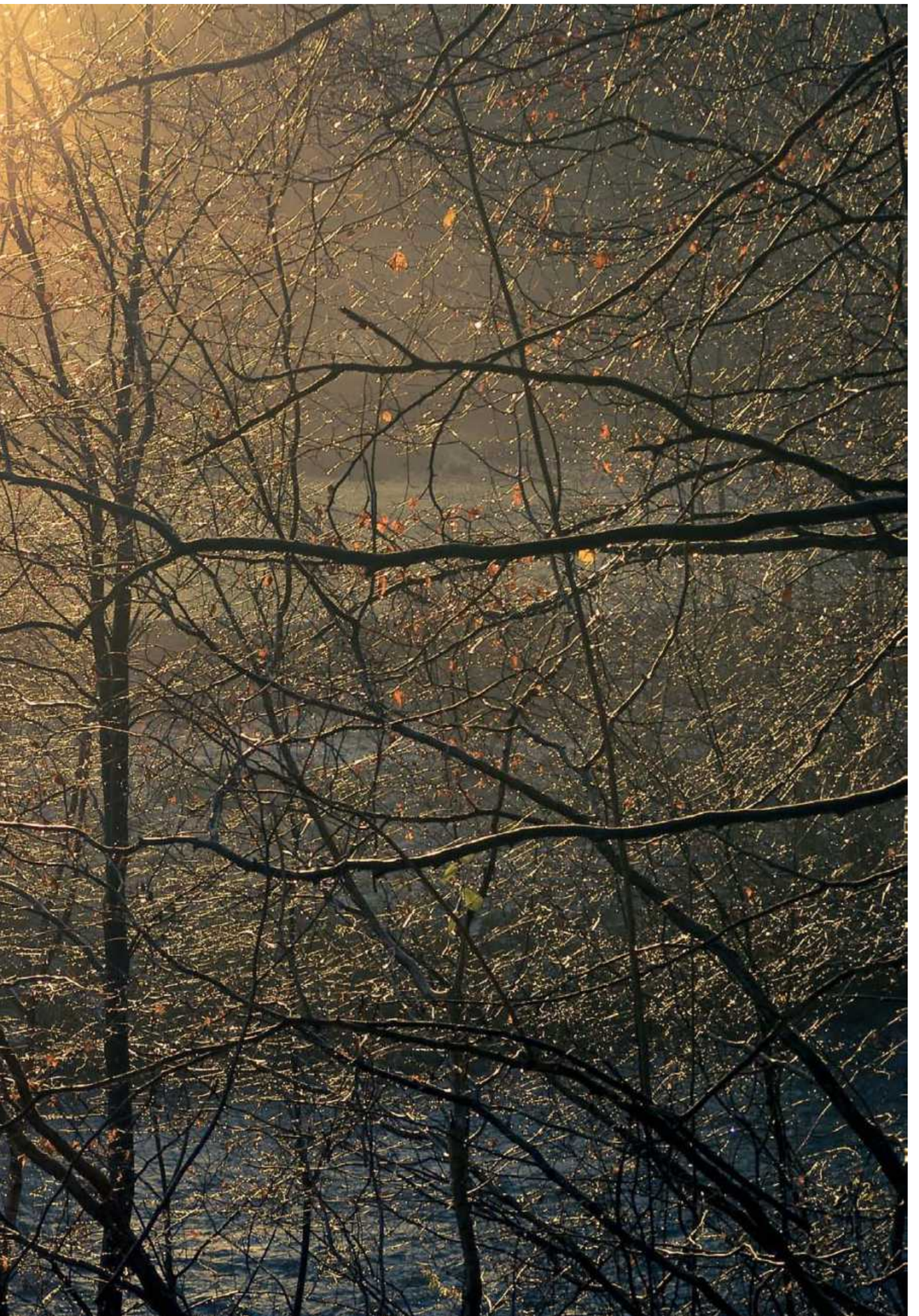
After the most compelling competition to date and more than 12,000 entries, these are the eight photographs that most impressed the judges. The photographers have all won a Fjällräven Kaipak and £200, and are now in the running to win the grand prize: an exclusive place on the epic Fjällräven Polar expedition to the Scandinavian Arctic. The overall winner will be announced live at the Telegraph Outdoors Show at London ExCel on the 13th of February, and will feature in next month's issue.

(*Note: all the caption information for the images is at the end of the feature*)

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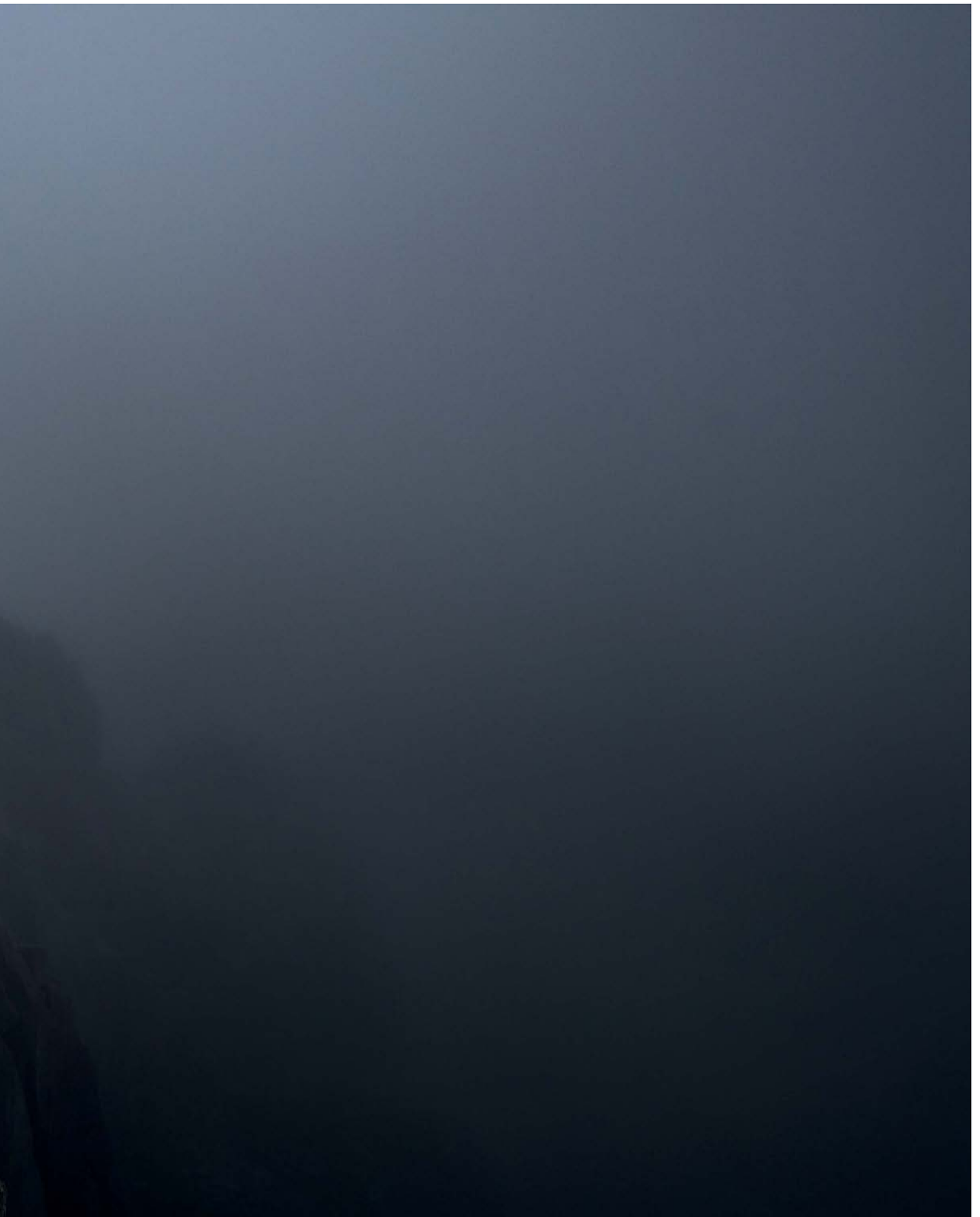



















The Smallest 1-digit
greatest 1-digit
Smallest 2-digit
greatest 2-digit
greatest 3-digit













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OPOTY.CO.UK

LIGHT ON THE LAND – WINNER



Ben Wayman (UK)

Having parked in the car park at Allen Banks, near Haydon Bridge in Northumberland in the north of England, I set off walking south, following the river Allen. My aim was to reach the remains of Staward Peel, a 14th-century monk fortress. The trees lining the river were dripping with dew, drawing me to capture this beautiful sun-soaked morning scene.

Nikon D60 with Nikon 18-55mm lens at 40mm, ISO 100, 1/125sec at f/5.6, ND8 filter

benwayman.co.uk

WILDLIFE INSIGHT – WINNER



Naomi Stolow (UK)

In a camp in South Africa this elephant walked right past my tent – so close I could have touched it. The elephant was munching on leaves and seemed completely unperturbed by my presence. I just sat and watched in amazement at the skilful curling around branches, taking what was needed. Enchanted by this, I decided to grab my camera to capture this trunk in action.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with EF 300mm lens, ISO 250, 1/2250sec at f/2.8, handheld

naomistolow.com

LIVE THE ADVENTURE – WINNER



Greg Whitton (UK)

Two walkers peer into the gloom on Tryfan's north ridge in Snowdonia, north Wales.

Fuji X-T1 with XF10-24mm lens at 13mm, ISO 200, 1/750sec at f/10, handheld

gregwhitton.com

AT THE WATER'S EDGE – WINNER



William Eades (Australia)

The leading edge of a thunderstorm, shot at Tacking Point, Port Macquarie in Australia. This was the most spectacular cloud formation I've seen first-hand. Many locals turned out to see the storm, but no one could have anticipated this. It was one of those adrenaline-filled moments where you can't help but stop and think, this is really happening.

Nikon D600 with Nikkor 16-35mm f/4 lens at 16mm, ISO 200, 1sec at f/22, handheld braced against a railing

facebook.com/Will-Eades-Photography-281100382077919

SPIRIT OF TRAVEL – WINNER



Andrea Francolini (Australia)

Foundation School in Chalt Pain, Gilgit-Baltistan, northern Pakistan. Electricity shortages in the area make it difficult for students in schools; they often have to move around the classroom in order to get the natural light they need to read their books.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon 24-70mm L lens (focal length unrecorded), ISO 1600, 1/60sec at f/5.6

afrancolini.com

UNDER EXPOSED – WINNER



George Karbus (Ireland)

After 11 years of freediving in Irish waters I have seen many types of beautiful jellyfish, but the summer last year was exceptionally warm and sunny and the ocean was a different place. There were amazing runs of moon and compass jellyfish. My girlfriend and I were on a freedive session when we discovered these compelling clouds of moon jellyfish. We immediately began swimming among them, enjoying the pulsing as they propelled themselves along.

Nikon D4 with Nikkor 16mm fisheye lens, ISO 1400, 1/500sec at f/11, Subal housing

georgekarbusphotography.com

SMALL WORLD – WINNER



Henrik Spranz (Austria)

During a macro tour I found this gossamer-winged butterfly, which was ideally placed for a shot in front of the rising sun. The surrounding vegetation was perfect for creating some bokeh, and I tried to include some background interest as well.

Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon 135mm f/2 L USM lens, ISO 400, 1/800sec at f/2.2, tripod

fotomat.500px.com

YOUNG OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR – WINNER



Anastasia Ziavra (Greece)

I took this photo at the beach in Chalkidiki, Greece.

Olympus E-510 with 14-42mm lens at 40mm, ISO 400, 5sec at f/5.6, handheld

NEXT MONTH

The overall winner will be revealed in the next issue, on sale 10 March – don't miss it!

Powerless in the face of beauty

Modern cameras are wonderful things, but they're not much use if you leave a vital component back at base. But, sometimes, says Nick Smith, when it's your day, good luck can turn up unexpectedly

Some time ago I wrote in this very column of an aborted expedition to Gower's Rhossili Bay: an outing thwarted by an enormous tree that had crashed down during an overnight storm and had brought all traffic to a stop. And it was only recently that I praised the opportunity Boxing Day gives us to brush off the yuletide cobwebs and get out into the field with the camera. As Boxing Day rose bright and fair, a pale sun making stately progress across the firmament in celebration of the abatement of the black sheets of Christmas rain, the prospect of an afternoon trip to Rhossili seemed to exorcise two of my demons in one fell swoop. It was but the work of a moment to confirm with the coastguard that not only were the meteorological conditions in my favour, but also a hike across the causeway to the tidal island of Worm's Head was on the cards.

As with my previous outing, I chugged along westwards in the automobile with a song in my heart. As I drove down into the valley at Parkmill, through which chuckles and burbles a jaunty little river called the Pennard Pill, I remembered with fond affection my previous ill-luck. Not today would there be an officer of the law bidding me to turn around and head back east. As I mused on such consoling thoughts, I threaded the car through the single-track lanes of the Lordship of Gower confident that today, of all days, would finally be my day.

I'd not planned to do anything particularly strenuous photographically, and so hadn't brought with me any equipment other than the camera that was sitting on my kitchen table. As it was already sporting one of my favourite wideangle lenses, I was happy to just pick up the instrument and get on the road. Having parked up near the Church of St Mary (where there's an interesting monument to Edgar Evans – the first of Captain Scott's men to die on the Terra Nova expedition), I donned the Ray-Bans, set my sou'wester to an angle of seasonal jaunt, laced up the walking books and set forth; if not quite like my fellow Welshman H.M.Stanley Esq. as he sallied forth to find Dr Livingstone, then with a sense of purpose that put the previous day's marathon of marzipan, walnuts, port and junk TV to shame. Here I was, a Wordsworthian solitary in his natural environment. All was well, and indeed, as St Julian of Norwich might have said: 'all manner of things shall be well.'

And, it has to be said, things were going well. That is until I came across my first puffins. Characterised by comic antics and a slightly bizarre collective noun, my afternoon's first 'improbability' of puffins seemed to be noisily indifferent to the fact that my camera was completely and utterly stone dead. Of course, it was only the work of another moment to remember that I'd left the battery charging in the kitchen. I didn't have my gadget bag and consequently no spare, and so perhaps the most positive thing I could say at this point about the afternoon's entertainment was that I'd taken my camera out for a nice walk.

There is nothing like not having a functioning camera with you to make you see the photographic possibility in everything before you. There were seals bobbing in the slate grey waters. The air was filled with skuas and guillemots, gulls and petrels. The sun was dipping towards the horizon behind a ghostly skein of silvery silk. Nothing could have made the scene before me more perfect for a spot of Boxing Day snapping. Apart from, that is, a battery. Here I was, in one of the most magnificent landscapes on earth, literally powerless.

'How d'ye do?' enquired a voice at my shoulder. It was an old friend out for a walk with his dog. Now, I know this looks like a literary artifice I've concocted to save the day, but it is really what happened. As we picked our way over the mussel beds towards the Worm, I told him my tale of woe. 'But your camera has a flash card in it?' he wondered. 'Well, yes,' quoth I, before explaining that it hardly any use, if I couldn't switch the camera on in the first place.

Don't you just hate it when someone says 'a-ha' and then solves all your problems with a straightforward piece of clever-dickery? He didn't, as you are supposing, produce a fully-charged battery out of a top hat. But he did offer to lend me his spare camera, which he retrieved from his gadget bag with what appeared to me to be an undisguised flourish. He looked at me, eyebrow arched, as if to say: 'Are you sure you write about photography for a living?'

And so we spent an amiable afternoon photographing Worm's Head – we even managed to bag a sunset shot of the Devil's Bridge – and though I say so myself, some of my shots weren't half bad.

My friend had taught me a valuable lesson that I don't think I'll forget in a hurry. That's because once the cars had been put away for the night and we were celebrating St Stephen's day with a pint, he taunted me endlessly, while I repaid his kindness by settling the bar bill.

NEXT MONTH

OP203 ON SALE 10 MARCH

How to take awesome macro photographs



Travel Photographer of the Year – the winners!

Quick guide to perspective

Tested: Canon PowerShot G5 X

Mark Horton – Jumping spider (*Evarcha arcuata*)

A photographer's guide to life on Earth

Embracing a more mindful approach to life and photography, ***Chris Weston*** *considers how tapping into the energy of our environment can help us to connect with nature*

PART 13 A change of heart

'As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world as in being able to remake ourselves' – Mahatma Ghandi

The racing outrigger canoe cut through the Pacific as speedily and effortlessly as a cetacean. I was fourth seat, in the middle of the line, one of the two powerhouse seats that are reserved for the strong and commanding paddlers. As I lunged, jabbing my paddle into the water and pulling back hard, my lungs let out an involuntary grunt. The truth was, I was unconvincing in my role.

I was a guest of Kihei Canoe Club, one of the oldest racing clubs on the Hawaiian island of Maui. The day had started well, under the tropical glow of the rising sun. The colourful canoe, or wa'a as it's known traditionally, was ready and prepared, and the ocean's calm water was awaiting us. We sang the traditional pre-race chant Aue Ua Hiki E to bring us together in a synergised unit and impel our canoe towards its destination. Then, as the swell approached, we lifted the Ama and launched. Spurred by our stroke's commands, we began to paddle hard. And that's where it all went wrong.

Just be

I have done some kayaking, but nothing prepared me for the rigour and intensity of outrigger racing. And this was just a practice. Before long, every part of my upper body ached and my lungs were groaning with every inhalation of oxygen. This was meant to be fun.

After a while, we took a break. To my right, a giant turtle poked his head above the aquamarine-coloured water, smiled at us and then drifted away. From behind, Timéo, the steersman and captain, called my name.

'You have to feel it', he said. 'Stop thinking about what you're doing and just be with the boat.'

Timéo explained how native Hawaiians regard the wa'a as living entities. They are hewn from trees chosen by a mythical raven and, when felled, metamorphose to fulfil their new destiny.

'The boat is energy,' he said. 'You are energy. The secret is to make a connection that brings your two energies together. Connect and you will feel no pain.'

As we set off again, I lifted my paddle over the water and closed my eyes. Holding my paddle high, I became attentive to the movement and rhythm of the hull. I lapsed into mindfulness and let impulse guide me. Without knowing, I was paddling again. I hadn't noticed because the aches were gone.



below My captain for the day explained how, to native Hawaiians, wa'a (outrigger canoes) are living entities. During races, paddlers connect to the energy to make paddling more efficient.

Science non-fiction

To describe a wooden boat as a living entity and to be advised to connect with its energy may sound far fetched – a pleasant fantasy that is mirrored in many folklores and mysticisms from indigenous cultures. The notion that we are all just energy, however, is also the foundation of modern (quantum) physics. Break down everything and anything – you, me, a wooden canoe – into its constituent parts and you'll find nothing but atoms, which are simply vortices of energy, constantly spinning and vibrating and radiating their own unique energy signature. And we can – and do – tap into that energy, all the time, every day.

Sexual attraction is one example. The feeling that you've known for a long time someone you've just met is another. Walking in on a couple and sensing the argument that took place before you arrived, another still. We do it without knowing because, like breathing, it is an automated function of the human body. In the modern era, however, we have come more and more to ignore it.

Animals don't ignore it. They use it. Migratory birds, such



as the European robin, for example, connect with the energy of Earth's magnetic field in order to navigate. And we shouldn't ignore it either. Tapping into and connecting with the energy of our environment is a useful tool, not just in life but in photography too.

It's something I do often when I'm working, although I hadn't realised it until recently. Looking back on past assignments, I've noticed that there have been times when creating an image has been easy and effortless, and there have been times when I've struggled to see anything at all. With hindsight, I now see that my best images are born when I am disconnected from the hubbub of everyday life and fully allied with the serenity of nature. This got me thinking: is there a way to make this energetic connection consciously? That is, to be able to command it at will rather than rely on the hit and miss disposition of chance or circumstance, thereby improving my productivity in the field.

A seismic shift

To answer my own question, I did a little studying. Back when I was working in IT sales I attended a training course, which, it seemed, had little to do with sales and much to do with attitude. One of the demonstrations involved the biggest, most macho member of the sales team holding his strongest arm out straight while the smallest woman in the group tried to force it down. As the exercise began, the trainer whispered the word 'lose' in the man's ear and almost instantly the salesman's arm fell easily and limply to his side.

The two then switched roles. This time the trainer whispered the word 'win' in the woman's ear and, try as he might, our macho protagonist couldn't get her arm to budge.

When the guffawing subsided, the trainer explained that the brain is able to shift energy around the body, as it's needed. In this example, it associated the word 'lose' with imminent physical defeat and compelled the body to move energy from the expendable limbs (in this case the man's arm) and centre it in the chest to protect the vital organs. But when the brain sensed victory (the word 'win') it shifted more and more energy into the arm – hence the reason why the small woman was able to hold off the much larger, stronger man.

above The European robin is one of many examples of animals that connect with energy to negotiate their way through life.

›

right To explore the role energy plays in our lives, while in Hawaii I enrolled in a class teaching T'ai chi.

A dog's tale

This idea of regulating energy in the body struck a chord; I recognised times in my past, while cycle racing or playing football, for example, when unwittingly I had experienced it. Recalling this, I looked into the movement of energy and was led to T'ai chi ch'uan and Qi Gong – two Chinese martial arts based on energy flow. Deciding to strike while the iron was hot, while still in Hawaii I enrolled on a course in T'ai chi.

At the end of my Hawaiian trip, on my way home to Switzerland, I stopped over in Los Angeles to visit my friend Leo Grillo. Among other things, Leo owns a care-for-life animal shelter, which I've visited many times. On site there is an animal hospital run by a vet who happens to be a keen photographer – Dr Brown. Leo was keen for me to stop by and say hello.

Because Dr Brown was overseeing surgery on a dog, we met in his operating theatre. The room was full of medical staff and space was tight. We were chatting in between phases of the procedure when, during a lull in conversation, I noticed a dog lying on a towel on the floor. The dog was comatose, his eyes closed and his tongue hanging out. I felt a surge of anguish. No one else was paying the dog any attention and I was surprised how I hadn't noticed him earlier.

I asked Dr Brown about his condition. He told me the dog had cancer and had just gone through chemotherapy and was 'out like a light' for a few hours. I felt the surge of anguish swell again. Dr Brown went back to his procedure and I looked down at the dog. I had a sense he was feeling vulnerable and scared. In my head, I said, 'It's OK, fella, you're going to be alright.' What happened next almost brought me to tears.



The dog opened his eyes, lifted his head slightly to look at me, rolled in his tongue and let out a gentle bark. He then went back to sleep.

I wasn't sure what to make of it so I said nothing and kept the memory.

Don't be a stranger

A few weeks later I was photographing in India. We'd stopped for a break when, in the distance, around 50 metres away, I saw a female elephant with a calf. The youngster was around a year old, which made him bold and curious. It also meant his mother was very protective; every time the calf moved to satisfy his curiosity, she would reach out her trunk, encircling him, and guide him gently back to her side. This happened half a dozen times as I watched on.

below When I first encountered the mother and baby elephants, the mother was emphatically protective of her young calf. The situation changed when I shifted my own energy.



I remembered the incident with the dog at Leo's animal shelter and I began to wonder. I decided to do a little experiment. Using some of the techniques I'd learned during my impromptu course in T'ai chi, I took a long, deep breath and fully relaxed my body. Mentally, I directed the flow of my energy to the centre of my chest – the heart region. And the most incredible thing happened.

The instant I made the energy shift, the female elephant relaxed her trunk and released the calf from her protective embrace. Finally free, the calf sauntered confidently towards the jeep, his head swaying gently and his ears flapping softly. He came all the way over and approached me, so close I could have reached out to touch him. Instead, I held my energy.

We stayed in our relative positions for a moment, as if in greeting. Then the young elephant lifted his trunk, placed the tip against my mouth and kissed me. He then took a step back, pulling the trunk away just an inch or two, and blew warm air over my face – this is a common exchange between elephants of disparate herds, a form of connection that ensures the animals involved are never again strangers.

Mixed messages

In these examples, the responses of the dog and the baby elephant were positive, reflective of the emotions I felt inside. There are other occasions when I've been less successful.

I have written before about my nervousness around domesticated horses (see OP197), but one time I wanted to go riding. I had been told that one should be dominant around horses, let them know who is the boss. So on the occasion of my ride, that's what I did. On the outside, I was commanding. On the inside, I was beset with nerves. I approached the horse, which immediately backed away and wouldn't let me mount her.

Years later, when I was in the Camargue for the first time, explaining to Monique (my partner) my feelings about horses, she told me a story about an experience she'd had with an animal communicator. The communicator had described how animals are sensitive to the energy humans emit, as well as being able to read our body language. In my case, in the example of the horse, while my body language gave a message of dominance, my energy was one of fear. This juxtaposition of opposites, she explained, would have confused the horse, even made it mistrustful, hence the reason it wouldn't let me ride.

Universal language

Humans possess the ability to connect with the energy of their environment just as animals do. Certainly our linguistic abilities and socialised living have largely negated any need we have to communicate this way. In everyday life we get by perfectly well with language. But nature doesn't understand grammar and punctuation. She speaks her own tongue, the language of the universe – the language of energy.

When I travel to any foreign country, I make it a rule to learn a little of the language. I find it improves my experience and helps me to connect with the people I encounter. I feel no different about nature and wilderness. When I'm photographing wildlife, my work and my experiences are enhanced when I'm able to connect energetically – a connection through which I can affect outcomes.

When we change the way we think, we change the way we feel and the energy of which we're made shifts a little bit. And because we are interconnected with everything around us, as Professor Brian Cox so eloquently described (see OP195), everything around us shifts a little bit too.

When we look through our viewfinders, what we see is literally a reflection of who we are in that moment. So now, when what I see is uninspiring, I don't point my finger at nature or circumstance. I don't immediately pack away my gear and move to a new location. Instead, I put down my camera and sit still and quietly. I look inside myself and I change me.

Next month, Chris explores why making a difference requires us to be better than our best.

© Simon Weir



left As well as being able to read our body language, horses are also sensitive to the energy humans emit, as I discovered in the Camargue.

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NATURE ZONE

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WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Laurie Campbell looks at how you can identify goat willow flowers

Life in the Wild

*Getting close to wildlife requires more than just a long lens, says **Laurie Campbell**. By using a well-camouflaged hide and basic fieldcraft skills you can remain undetected for longer*

Looking over my record of subjects covered in previous columns, I see it has been several years since I last wrote about using hides. In the intervening period we have seen the emergence of a greater choice of equipment than ever before. The meteoric rise in popularity of wildlife photography has no doubt driven manufacturers to devise countless gizmos, encouraging us to believe that by owning them we stand a better chance of getting close to wildlife. Certainly, using a long lens can help, but it's not the entire solution. Anything we can do to lessen the impact of our presence when attempting to get close to wildlife has to make a difference.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and it's best to go back to basics in order to decide what the priorities are for each subject. Begin by thinking about its senses. For all birds and mammals it's best to assume that their eyesight and hearing are at least as good as our own. When it comes to mammals and snakes you need to consider their sense of smell, and try to keep downwind of them. Recently, outdoor clothing that claims to mask human scent has appeared on the market but, at present, it's geared towards hunters stalking deer. This technology is not yet available in hides, so you need to be aware of the problem of introducing different scents from the material in the hide itself, and any associated paraphernalia.

Where wind direction is variable, one option is to work from above the noses of your subjects using a hide built on a platform up a tree. Stalkers culling deer in woodland have always used



Constructed at the edge of a pinewood to photograph black grouse lekking in spring, this improvised hide was made out of natural materials, and a sheet of heavy-gauge polythene to make the roof watertight.
Nikon F3 with Nikon 50-300mm f/4.5 lens, Kodachrome 64, 1/60sec at f/11, mirror-lock up, cable release, tripod

permanent wooden structures known as 'high seats', but now there are portable aluminium versions available. These models lean against a tree trunk, and fold down into an integral pack frame. With careful positioning, and the addition of camouflage screening, this setup could be ideal for photographing deer, badgers and foxes.

Ground level hides are much easier to arrange, and in years gone by many of us improvised our own, which, truth be told, often resembled square-shaped toilet tents. Nowadays, there are folding chair hides and dome hides that are far superior to anything we could put together ourselves. They are lightweight and self-supporting, so can be set up quickly and used on a variety of surfaces, including shingle, rock, mud and sand.

Before investing in a hide, it's a good idea to experiment with camouflage netting: this comes in various forms, from sheets of ex-army netting to more sophisticated and lighter leafscreen material sold by the metre. It's versatile and can be thrown over a long lens on a tripod, suspended between vegetation, or draped over a hide to provide a surface that natural materials can be woven into for extra camouflage. With such choice, we've never had it so good.

LAURIE'S FACTFILE

Hide etiquette

» If you've only ever used a permanent wooden hide, like the ones commonly found on nature reserves, you might find that working from a dedicated photography hide opens up a whole world of possibilities for getting close to wildlife.

» Whether it's improvised or purchased off-the-shelf, using a hide successfully comes down to introducing it carefully to your intended subject. A good place to start is in the garden, where you can set up a hide next to a bird feeding station, or overlooking a pond where birds visit to drink and bathe. Most species of garden bird are conditioned to people being around, so it's usually possible to get inside the hide and obtain pictures within a few hours.

» For wary subjects elsewhere, it's essential to spend some time introducing the hide by building it in stages, or simply erecting it at a distance then moving it closer and closer over the course of a few days. Either way, it's important to check, from a distance, that the subject has accepted each stage and the changes to its surroundings.

» Once established, how you behave in a hide is as important as the hide itself. Although you may not be able to see your subject, it's very likely that you are being watched. Having a comfortable seat reduces the likelihood of constant fidgeting. Think about the lens you are going to use, and stick with it. With the lens protruding from the hide, avoid panning back and forth unnecessarily or making adjustments quickly.

» Keep equipment to a minimum. Store spare batteries, teleconverters, memory cards, etc in a small camera bag or daypack, along with food and drink. Undo zippers or Velcro fastenings in advance so you can work silently.

opposite Photographed on the edge of its nest, 10m from me, this female golden eagle is more curious about its reflection in my lens. At this range, with a bird that spots prey from a kilometre away, hide technique has to be spot on. *Nikon D3X with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 200, 1/500sec at f/5.6. tripod, hide*

below (left) This image shows the interior of the hide from which I photographed the close up of the golden eagle. To avoid having to change lenses, I accustomed the birds to seeing two protruding out of the hide, attached to separate camera bodies. *Nikon D300 with Sigma 15mm f/2.8 lens, ISO 400, 1/250sec at f/9, flash, handheld*

below (right) The woodland camouflage pattern of this dome hide blended well with its rocky surroundings, enabling me to photograph wading birds undetected. I sited the hide against a tall rock ledge. *Nikon F4S with Nikon 17-35mm f/2.8 AFS lens, Fuji Velvia 50, 1/60sec at f/11, handheld*





What to shoot this month...

Laurie's March highlights



▲ Willows are a difficult group of trees and shrubs to tell apart, and the situation isn't helped by the fact that many of them hybridise. Nowadays, we have the internet, field guides and the Woodland Trust to assist in our quest, but at this time of year we can also look at their flowers. Sometimes known as pussy willows, the male flowers of **goat willow** (*Salix caprea*) are large and yellow and are a good source of nectar for early bumblebees.
Nikon F3 with Nikon 50-300mm f/4.5 lens, Kodachrome 64, 1/125sec at f/8, mirror-lock up, tripod, cable release



▲ With winter drawing to a close, geese that overwintered with us in the UK will soon be heading to their breeding grounds in the far north, so there's not much time left to photograph them. Species that are primarily based around the coast, such as **Brent geese** (*Branta bernicla*) and **barnacle geese** (*Branta leucopsis*), require access to freshwater to bathe and keep their plumage in good condition. As a result, they're attracted to freshwater streams that flow into estuaries and shorelines.
Nikon F5 with Nikon 500mm f/4 AFS lens, Fuji Provia 100, 1/500sec at f/5.6, beanbag, hide





◀ The emergence of common frogs (*Rana temporaria*) from hibernation is well photographed, but **common toads** (*Bufo bufo*), which congregate a few weeks later, receive less interest. This is a pity, because they are fascinating amphibians, with beautiful golden-bronze eyes. They are also much more tolerant than common frogs, so they can be approached easily and, most importantly, they stay in one place for longer.
Nikon D2X with Nikon 200mm f/4 AF macro lens, ISO 100, 1/160sec at f/7.1, beanbag

▲ Spring arrives late in the Scottish Highlands so **red deer** (*Cervus elaphus*) that have spent the winter on lower ground, escaping the worst of the weather by sheltering in the glens, will soon be heading to higher ground, with stags casting their antlers in a month or so. In some locations, estates provide supplementary feeding for the deer in the form of silage or hay, allowing them to be photographed by the roadside using a vehicle as a hide.
Nikon D3S with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 500, 1/500sec at f/4, handheld

MORE SEASONAL SUBJECTS...

Flora

Goat willow (*Salix caprea*) – as a comparison to the male flowers, the female ones are more compact and grey-green in colour.

Creeping speedwell (*Veronica filiformis*) – a very common, delicate plant of gardens and grassy places with beautiful blue flowers.

White butterbur (*Petasites albus*) – a common but exotic-looking plant of damp ground that initially erupts with a robust white flower spike.

Fauna

Buff-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*) – often active in early spring, together with the aptly named **early bumblebee** (*Bombus pratorum*).

Violet ground beetle (*Carabus violaceus*) – three centimetres in length, these large predatory nocturnal beetles can be found underneath logs and rocks.

Pipistrelle bats – there are three species of pipistrelle bats and they emerge from hibernation in late March.

WORLD WILDLIFE SPECTACLES



© Visionary Earth/Shutterstock

Flying foxes, Australia

Named for their vulpine faces, flying foxes (also known as fruit bats) are the largest bats in the world, and the only mammals capable of sustained flight. Australia has four species of flying foxes – black, grey headed, little red and spectacled – and all can be found in Queensland. Batty Boat Cruises offer trips up the Brisbane River to Indooroopilly Island, the summer home of thousands of breeding flying foxes.

Indian rhinoceroses, Nepal

Found in northern India and southern Nepal, the Indian rhinoceros, also called greater one-horned rhinoceros, is the fifth largest land animal on Earth. One of the best places to see them is in Chitwan National Park, a World Heritage reserve covering 360 square miles of forest and riverine grassland. Located 100 miles from Kathmandu, it has a number of long-established lodges offering guided walks, elephant rides and jeep drives in the reserve. Numbers of wintering birds in Nepal's lowlands reach their peak in February and March, making this a great time to visit.



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10 URBAN NATURE OASES

You don't have to trek deep into the countryside to find a wealth of wildlife; our urban spaces are full of pockets of nature, and there are some superb reserves just a stone's throw from our towns and cities. Here are some top places around the UK to head this spring...



© Industrioto Ltd

1 The Regent's Park, London

One of many excellent wildlife sites in the capital, the Regent's Park boasts at least 200 bird species, including winter visitors such as redwing and mistle thrush. It also has a spectacular heronry, with over 20 nesting pairs each year.
royalparks.org.uk

2 Moseley Bog and Joy's Wood, Birmingham

Situated to the south of the city centre, the nature reserve was the childhood playground of *The Lord of the Rings* author JRR Tolkien. Comprising damp, boggy woodland and grassy areas, it is full of gnarled old trees and, in spring, wonderful displays of bluebells.
bbcwildlife.org.uk/moseley-bog-joys-wood

3 Glasgow Necropolis

The second largest green space in Glasgow, the cemetery is a surprising wildlife site, with tree-covered slopes, wooded corners, an ivy-covered quarry face and wildflower areas. The bluebells are a particular highlight in spring.
glasgownecropolis.org



© iozar/Shutterstock

4 Avon Gorge, Bristol

Bristol is one of the UK's best cities for urban wildlife, and the Avon Gorge is the jewel in the crown. The dramatic rock formation has some of the UK's rarest tree species and is home to breeding peregrines and buzzards.
avongorge.org.uk

5 River Tyne, Newcastle

Running through the heart of Newcastle, the Tyne is the best river in England for salmon, and otters thrive here too. The city also boasts the world's most inland breeding colony of kittiwakes – the ocean-going gulls nest on the Tyne bridge.
visitnewcastle.com/newcastle-river-tyne.php

6 Sefton Park, Liverpool

Great crested grebes, which begin their famous courtship displays in February, are among the waterbirds that can be found on the lake in Sefton Park in the centre of Liverpool. Water voles may also be seen around the streams.
liverpool.gov.uk/leisure-parks-and-events

7 Water of Leith, Edinburgh

Stroll along the city's 12-mile riverside path for a good chance of seeing herons and kingfishers.
waterofleith.org.uk

8 Cardiff Bay, Cardiff

Due to its coastal location and wide range of habitats, Cardiff is a great place for wildlife. The Cardiff Bay Wetlands Reserve attracts waterbirds such as herons, coots, great crested grebes, teal and snipe, while the rivers Taff and Ely provide shelter for a variety of roosting gulls.
cardiffharbour.com

9 Astley Moss, Greater Manchester

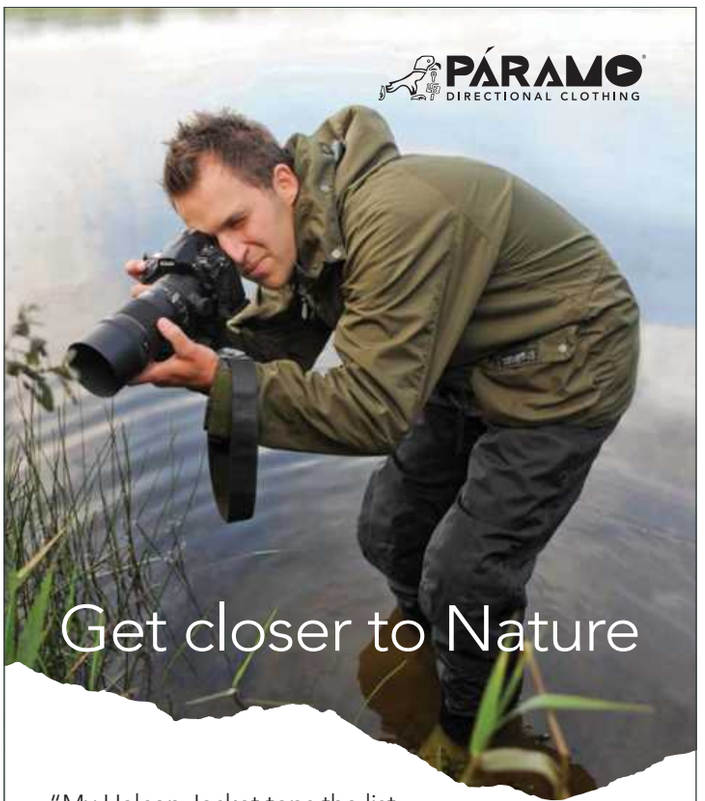
Lying approximately four miles south of Leigh, Astley Moss nature reserve supports a number of wintering raptors, including short-eared owl, hen harrier and merlin. It is also good for dragonflies and breeding birds such as curlew, whinchat and willow tit.
lancswt.org.uk/reserves/astley-moss

10 Winnall Moors, Hampshire

An area of floodplain of the beautiful river Itchen, Winnall Moors (pictured below) is a tranquil nature reserve just half a mile from Winchester city centre. It has a rich variety of plants, and in spring it is a great place to see nesting birds. The river supports a number of breeding dragonflies, and there's a chance of spotting water vole.
hiwwt.org.uk/reserves/winnall-moors



© Steve Page



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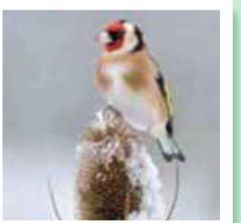
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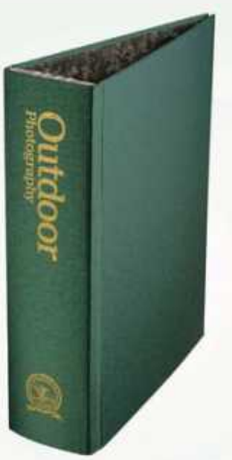
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Seeing beyond the obvious

*In his pursuit of macro subjects, **Mark Horton** has discovered that the most compelling images are often found in the unlikeliest places, including information boards...*

As most people who are into photographing nature and wildlife will know, the search for your quarry can sometimes mean miles of walking and crawling through all kinds of habitats. Even for a macro photography addict like myself, this is certainly the case when I go in search of very small subjects to photograph.

I live in Surrey Heath where I am lucky enough to be surrounded by vast swathes of protected heathland and woodland. I have spent many happy hours wandering great distances in search of particular heathland specialist species. One of the glorious things about being obsessed with tiny creatures is that you often find something to photograph in places that most people overlook.

So it's not always necessary to venture so far to find potential subjects to photograph. The wonderful information boards found at most nature reserves, usually within yards of the car park, can be an absolute goldmine for the macro shooter. When bathed in sunshine, these boards will have basking bees, wasps and flies. And where flying things congregate, there will always be hunters stalking them.

I've seen jumping spiders living under the plastic of the dragonfly identification board at Surrey's Thursley Common (the same species once chased me off at Fox Corner Wildlife Area, near Worplesdon, as it aggressively defended its territory against its own reflection in my camera lens). During the colder months, and where there's cover and the board is damp and shady, you're sure to find all manner of bugs, springtails and mites. If you're extremely lucky, you may stumble upon mites hunting springtails! You might even come across caterpillars that have fallen from overhead foliage and are trying to make their way back.

The image here, taken on the information board at Brentmoor Heath, a Surrey Wildlife Trust site near Lightwater, is a personal favourite. This particular board overlooks the Bronze Age tumuli on the heath, but on this occasion I was drawn to the rather handsome *Formica fusca* ants climbing over the text. It was clear that the subject would make a good high-key shot, with the text underneath providing a particularly unusual background for an insect in the wild.

One of the best lessons I've learned from my adventures in the miniature world of invertebrates is that the most exciting photo opportunities are not always on the flowers, trees and other attention hogging greenery. Some of my most rewarding shots have been taken on fence posts, fallen logs and those invaluable information boards on the edges of car parks.

On the wing

Determined not to come home empty-handed, ***Steve Young*** *hires a local guide and heads off into the Cairngorm Mountains full of optimism – and a fair amount of chocolate*

above Views like this of ptarmigan camouflaged against the snow made the effort worthwhile.

below There was a small flock of snow buntings around the Cairngorm ski centre building that showed well.

The last time I visited the Cairngorm Mountains in Scotland it was a bit of a disaster (see OP166). It was late spring/early summer and after trudging around the peaks for two days all I had to show for my efforts were a few record-type shots of ptarmigan, and little else. Disappointed, I resolved to do things properly next time. Last winter I planned a three-day trip to the area and hired an expert local guide Marcus Conway to show me the best locations.

We met at the Grant Arms Hotel (otherwise known as 'The UK's Wildlife Hotel'), which was to be my base for the trip. This place is a birder's paradise as it is home to the Bird Watching Wildlife Club (BWWC), which produces a free monthly newspaper, *The Watcher*, giving details of local sightings and upcoming walks and talks. The hotel also has a superb library and lecture room.



Morning dawned sunny and bright, one of those winter days that you dream about. Arriving in the car park at the foot of the mountain, I gazed at the snowy scene and thought about all the landscape photographers who would love to be where I was at that moment. Then I ignored the view and turned my attention to the birds – you can only specialise in one subject! I looked at the route ahead then looked at my tripod, and put it back in the boot. With snow and ice underfoot, the walk was going to be hard enough, and I didn't want to be lugging that around on my shoulder. Besides, the light was good so I was prepared to risk handholding the camera, or resting the lens on rocks or snow. Armed with a bottle of water and a pocketful of chocolate, we set off.

Marcus and I weren't alone on the mountain that day: in the distance we could see people enjoying a stroll, while up ahead we spotted a few photographers, and even some people on skis taking their dogs for a walk. Over the next four hours, I watched and photographed ptarmigan. By now, these mountain birds had lost their brown summer plumage, and were sporting beautiful white feathers.

While locating the birds had been easy, the biggest problem was the glorious weather, and what it was doing to my light meter – white snow, white birds, and full sun are not the best combination, and I was afraid of losing detail in the feathers. Luckily, shooting digitally allowed me to experiment and check the results; it would have been a different story if I'd been using slide film. Anyway, I did what I always do in 'white bird, bright sun' situations: I underexposed by at least one stop from what bright conditions might normally dictate, and bracketed my exposures.

By the end of the session I was happy with what I'd taken, and even happier that I hadn't slipped over – although I had been up to my thighs in snow at one point. Sated, we headed back down the mountain. We spent the last few hours of the day photographing red grouse at a few sites along minor roads.

The following morning I returned to the mountains to spend time with the snow buntings. Thanks to my inept map reading, and now minus my guide, the journey took twice as long as it should have done. When I eventually arrived I managed to take some nice shots of the buntings by baiting them down with seed placed in the snow. A day spent with crested tits and more red grouse, rounded off a successful trip.

Steve's March highlights



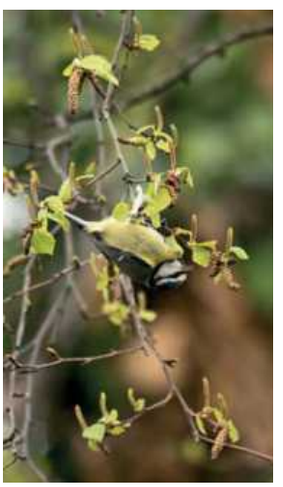
Blue tit is such a common species that it's easy to overlook its beauty; if it were a rare bird, photographers would spend hours trying to take the ultimate shot. As well as being one of our favourite garden birds, it's also one of the easiest to photograph. Blue tits are a regular visitor to feeders – peanuts, seeds and suet balls are all well received – and its willingness to use nest boxes means that it's often present throughout the year, offering plenty of opportunity to build up a photo collection. If you place a perch near a feeder it will be used almost instantly – their antics are great fun to watch.



left (top) Peanuts wedged in a branch will always be found first by blue or great tits.

left (bottom) A blue tit portrait is hard to beat; for this shot a feeder was placed below the branch.

below Blue tits are great to watch; this one is searching for aphids on a silver birch tree.



BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY TIP

I have mentioned photographing birds in snow before (see OP200), but as winter is still upon us I make no apologies for covering the subject again. Many photographers like to have a prolonged spell of hard weather, but I'm always concerned about the effects such conditions have on bird populations. Having said that, I do experience a child-like excitement when I open the curtains and see snow on the ground.

Most modern cameras cope well in these situations, but it's worth experimenting to see how accurate your meter readings are. Just select an auto exposure mode, take a couple of shots and check the results on your LCD monitor. Now select a semi-auto exposure mode and experiment with spot, partial or centre-weighted metering.

You might need a different exposure for different birds, so don't be disheartened if you don't get it right first time. Obviously, you can adjust the exposure slightly during post-production, but it's always more satisfying to get it right on location.





top Faced with a blackbird in snow, I spot-metered off the pear, and the reading was pretty accurate. The original was slightly overexposed, but nothing I couldn't fix later.

bottom To ensure the correct exposure I took a spot-meter reading off the robin's back, and added a touch of fill-flash.

LOCATION OF THE MONTH



© Paul Chesterfield (rspb-images.com)



© John Bridges (rspb-images.com)

Northward Hill, Kent

Situated on the Hoo Peninsula, and affording a wonderful view out across the Thames Marshes, Northward Hill is a superb place to visit in spring. A vast area of woodland, grazing marsh and farmland, the reserve has the UK's biggest heronry, with almost 150 pairs nesting in the treetops. Since 2000, Northward's grey herons have been joined by a large colony of little egrets; both species begin their noisy courtship displays in March.

With songbirds such as blackbirds, robins, song thrushes, great tits and wrens, the dawn chorus is a real spring highlight at Northward. Later in spring, nightingales return to the reserve to breed in the undergrowth – listen for their song in April and May, when bluebells fill the open areas of the wood. The reserve also has great swathes of flat marshes, where lapwings and avocets breed.

Location Northward Hill RSPB reserve lies just north of High Halstow.
Opening times Open from dawn to dusk all year round.
Facilities Car park, toilets, nature trails.
Nearest refreshments are at the Horseshoe & Castle pub in Cooling village, and the Red Dog in High Halstow (1.5 miles).
Website rspb.org.uk/northwardhill

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VIEWPOINTS

Your photos of your favourite locations could earn you £50! Send us up to 10 of your best digital images or slides and, if one is selected, you will earn £50.



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We are always on the lookout for inspiring new features. If you have a great idea for an article then please send a short outline (no more than 60 words), plus five accompanying low-res images for our consideration.

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IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

Take on our photo challenge – send us your best 'compositions' (see *page 111*), and as well as having your image in the July 2016 issue of *OP*, you could also win a Joby GorillaPod Focus Tripod and Ball Head X plus a Joby Pro Sling Strap





LETTERS

Write to us! Please send your views, opinions and musings to claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com, or send your comments to us by post. If your letter is published as our 'Letter of the Month' you'll win a prize; this month we gave away a Samsung Pro+ SDXC 64GB memory card, worth £87.99.



Please note: letters may be edited.

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Register your interest for our soon to be announced *OP* Reader Days, and you could be joining us and some of our professional contributors at one of a number of great UK locations. Please send your full contact details, including name, postal address, and a daytime telephone number to anna.evans@thegmcgroup.com, or use our postal submission form.



WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Tell us the name of the location featured on page 112 and this month you could win a Snugpak Softie Jacket 6, worth £119.95. Designed to keep you warm in temperatures as low as -5°C, the jacket features Paratex Micro on the outer and Paratex Light on the inner to keep you cosy.



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3 Write your name and contact details on your CD

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We are unable to accept speculative submissions via email, so please do not send work in this way, unless requested to do so by a member of the *OP* editorial team.

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You can send us links to your website, for us to view your general work only. Please note that strictly no correspondence will be entered into regarding website submissions. Send the link to opweb@thegmcgroup.com.

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Outdoor Photography, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN

RETURN OF YOUR WORK

Please include a SAE if you would like your submission returned.

PLEASE NOTE

Due to the many submissions we receive from our readers each month, no correspondence can be entered into. If you have not heard from us within 10 weeks (except for Viewpoints) then it is unlikely we will be using your work in the magazine on this occasion.

IMPORTANT

GMC Publications cannot accept liability for the loss or damage of any unsolicited material, including slides.

EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

If you would like an exhibition or event to be included in *Outdoor Photography*, please email Anna Bonita Evans at anna.evans@thegmcgroup.com **at least 10 weeks in advance**. You can also send information to the postal address (above).

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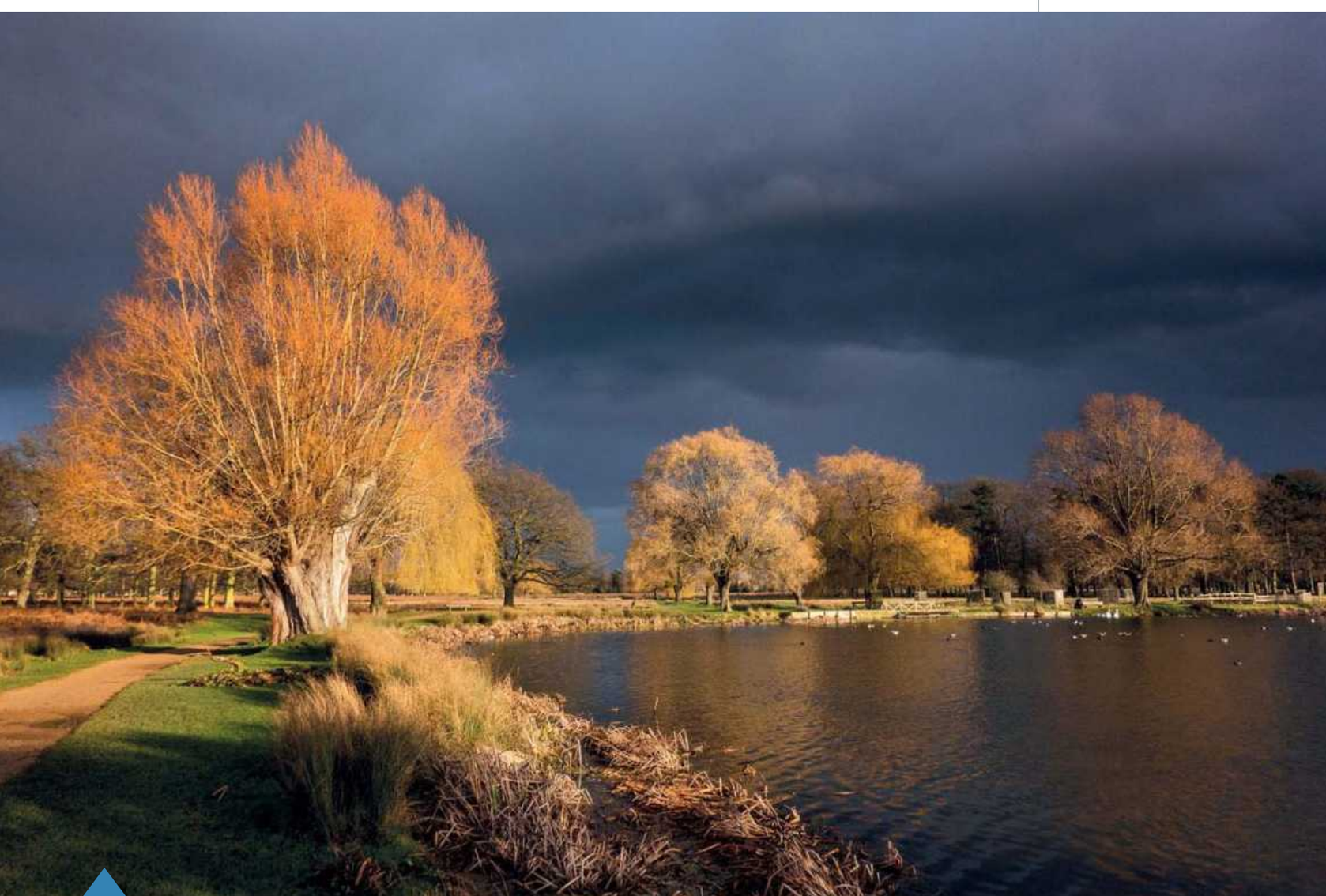
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90 **Gearing up** | 92 **Camera test**



SONY RX100 IV – AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION?

Andy Luck puts Sony's latest RX100 series compact camera to the test

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Mujjo double layered touchscreen gloves

Keeping your hands protected while out photographing is vital, but so is having full control of your gadgets – especially your smartphone. Keeping you fully connected to your touchscreen devices, Mujjo has upgraded its gloves with an additional layer, made out of wool, for extra insulation, plus a silicon grip dot pattern on the palms to provide anti-slip capabilities. Other updated features include a leather wrist strap, cuff boards and a magnetic snap closure.

Guide price £28
mujjo.com



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Guide price £150
cascadedesigns.com



360fly action camera

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Guide price £429
intro2020.co.uk



Samsung Portable SSD T3

Following the success of the tiny yet mighty SSD T1 in early 2015, Samsung have released their latest upgrade, the SSD T3, which, while still smaller than the average business card, has an increased 2TB capacity. Its transfer speed is faster too, reaching 450MB per second when using a USB 3.1 interface, making the SSD T3 up to four times faster than other external hard drives on the market. It also has a USB-C connector, so it will work with newer portable host devices such as the latest smartphones and tablets.

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Guide price £224.99
lexar.com



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Guide price £139.95
snugpak.com



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Guide price £49.99
edzdirect.com



Apple iMac 21.5in

Delivering spectacular image quality thanks to its Retina 4K display, Apple's latest iMac is ideal for photographers wanting a top performing computer to process images to a professional standard. The Fusion Drive combines flash storage with a high-capacity hard drive for up to 1TB of storage, plus its 3.1GHz quad-core Intel Core i5 processor makes this one of Apple's fastest desktop systems to date.

Guide price £1,849
apple.com



Sony RX1R II

The RX1R II, the latest addition to Sony's Cyber-shot RX range, promises the highest picture quality of any Sony compact camera made to date. Bringing the high spec of DSLRs to the smaller camera models, the RX1R II has a 42.4MP 35mm full-frame Exmor R CMOS sensor, 399 focal-plane phase detection AF points, a top ISO of 25600, a continuous shooting mode of five frames per second and an optical variable low pass filter.

Guide price £2,600
sony.co.uk



Sony RX100 MkIV

Sony has disrupted the photography market with several innovations, and the latest iteration of the RX100 series promises to change things with pocket cameras. **Andy Luck** puts it through its paces



Guide price £759
Contact sony.co.uk

The Sony RX100 compact camera provides detail and dynamic range to rival much bigger cameras but, thanks to a revolutionary 1in sensor, it comes in tiny, pocket-sized form that means you can always have it with you – often half the battle when it comes to capturing unique moments.

The original RX100 of 2012 had excellent image quality, and that along with the Carl Zeiss T lens and great build quality made this one of the most sought after compact cameras. It came at a price, but what a jewel of a camera it was, with metal framework, minimalist design and a body depth of only 36mm so it could even fit in the pocket of a pair of jeans; something you can't say about many other cameras with this kind of image quality.

In June 2013, Sony added a useful tilt-screen to the MkII version while only increasing the depth by a couple of millimetres, and a year later came the MkIII that featured a built-in viewfinder – a feature many felt the RX100 series was crying out for. The viewfinder may be tiny but it makes a significant difference when composing in bright conditions, and also aids shooting in low light, where bracing the camera to your face improves your chances of holding the camera steady at lower shutter speeds.

The excellent Carl Zeiss Vario-Sonnar T* lens had gone from a 28-100mm f/1.8-4.9 in the MkI and MkII versions to a wider and shorter but brighter 24-70mm f/1.8-2.8 lens – with two bonded aspherical elements – in the MkIII. The new lens focused closer than the previous version and raised the performance all round, although the loss of the longer telephoto reach of the previous models was a slight negative.

Outwardly, the MkIV looks identical to the MkIII, apart from a tasteful new knurled finish to the lens control ring. It retains the same lens and is the same size, with only the slightest hint of an increase in weight. Under the surface,



below The RX100's have always been good at handling light, and the latest MkIV version with RS sensor is no exception. It captured the exceptional light of this stormy scene perfectly. *Sony RX100 MkIV with 24-70mm f/1.8-2.8 lens at 24mm, ISO 200, 1/1600sec at f/4.5*

LIKES

✓ Design and build
✓ Ingenious EVF with improved resolution
✓ Fantastic image quality and 16fps shooting
✓ Fabulous Slo-mo and 4K Video
✓ Built-in ND filter

DISLIKES

✗ Wall charger should be included
✗ Would prefer longer telephoto capabilities for portraits





SPECS

Sensor 20.1MP 1in Exmor RS CMOS Sensor
Image size 5472 x 3648
Lens 24-70mm f/1.8-2.8 Carl Zeiss Vario Sonnar T*
Processor Bionz X
Shutter speed 30sec - 1/32000sec
ISO 125-12800
Electronic viewfinder Pop-up, 2.36 million dots
LCD 3in 1,228,000-dot, tilting 180°
ND filter 3-stop
Flash Pop-up
HD movie mode 4K XAVC S 100Mbps, Super Slo-Mo to 960fps
Connections Micro-USB, micro-HDMI (Type D)
Power NP-BX1 li-ion battery
Size 102 x 58 x 41mm
Weight 298g

above (left) Not only can you shoot 17MP stills while shooting HD video, but 4K recording is also available. Best of all, the camera has super slow motion with start or end trigger. *Sony RX100 MkIV with 24-70mm f/1.8-2.8 lens at 24mm, ISO 125, 1/500sec at f/2.5*

above (right) Close focus (5cm) is pretty good and, combined with the fast f/1.8 maximum aperture, it allows you to isolate and emphasise specific subject areas. *Sony RX100 MkIV with 24-70mm f/1.8-2.8 lens at 24mm, ISO 200, 1/500sec at f/1.8*



however, the MkIV contains some amazing new features thanks to its revolutionary stacked Exmor RS CMOS sensor. The advantage of the new RS stacked sensor and improved Bionz X processor is the incredible speed of operation, which is hard to believe is possible from such a small camera.

There is now an electronic shutter that catapults the maximum shutter speed from 1/2000sec on the old model to 1/32000sec, and continuous shooting speeds have increased from an already impressive 10 frames per second to an amazing 16 frames per second.

Video has always been a lead feature of the RX series, and is now of stellar quality for a pocket camera, with slow motion video recording of 240,480 and 960fps, and 4K video recording (though there's a five-minute recording limit). It has full sensor readout and bit rates up to 100Mbps. Picture Profile modes have also been added, including the popular S-Log2 professional gamma setting, and timecode with user bit is now possible. Dual recording that captures 17MP stills while recording up to 1080/30p video is possible, while the clean HDMI out and zebras retained from the previous model add to the camera's professional appeal.

The innovative and useful three-stop built-in neutral density filter allows the slow shutter speeds needed for natural looking motion in video mode. In stills mode, it enables wider apertures to be used for depth of field effects or slower shutter speeds, for example to record moving subjects with creative blur. The lens ring control, focus peaking and Sweep Panorama mode are all still there, along with Wi-Fi and NFC. Downloadable apps include a useful time-lapse and multiple exposure mode.

Battery life is around 280 shots, slightly down from the 320 frames of the MkIII, which is a shame. Once again the battery can only be charged in the camera via USB cable, which is a drawback to all the RX100 series and may not suit everyone. Performance though is very good for a compact camera, with quick startup and responsive focus and shutter.

VERDICT

The RX100 MkIII already had outstanding image quality in both stills and video modes, but the MkIV with the new super fast Exmor RS sensor, 16fps, superb 4K video and fascinating super slow motion capabilities moves the pocket camera segment of the market to a whole new level. For the still and video shooter who wants the smallest possible camera, it simply doesn't get any better than this; outstanding!

RATINGS

Handling	**95%**
Performance	**97%**
Specification	**98%**
Value	**90%**

OVERALL **95%**

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Canon EOS 6D



20.2 megapixels | 4.5 fps | 1080p movie mode | full frame CMOS sensor

6D **£1119**

6D Body	£1119

Canon EOS 7D Mark II



20.2 megapixels | 10.0 fps | 1080p movie mode

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Canon EOS 5D Mark III



22.3 megapixels | 6.0 fps | Full Frame CMOS sensor

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Black or Red

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24.1 megapixels | 6.0 fps | 1080p movie mode

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24.2 megapixels | 6.0 fps | 1080p movie mode

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24.3 megapixels | 6.0 fps | 1080p movie mode

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16.2 megapixels | 11.0 fps | Full Frame CMOS sensor

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CUSTOMER REVIEW: D4s Body

★★★★★ 'Spectacular Camera' *Charlie Delta – Hertfordshire*

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16.3 megapixels

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Black or Silver



16.1 megapixels | 8.5 fps

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Black



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42.0 megapixels | 5.0 fps | 4k Video

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Black or Silver



24.3 megapixels | 11.0 fps | 1080p movie mode

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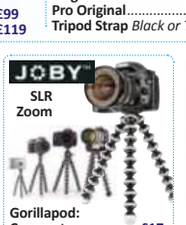
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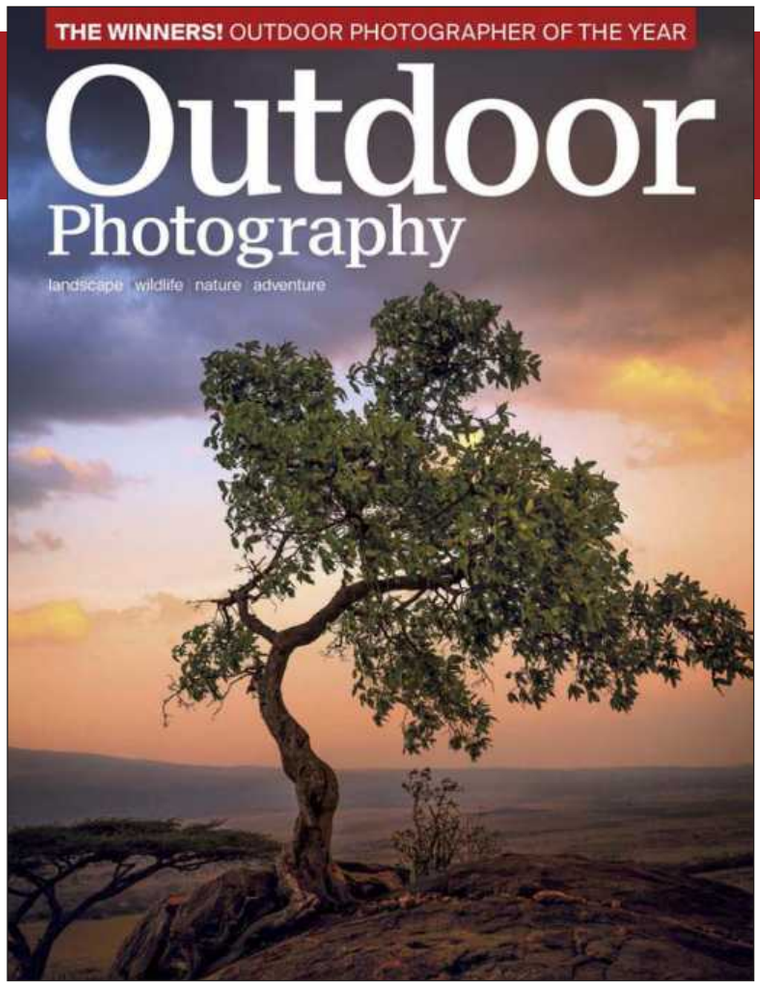
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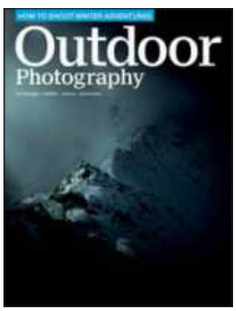
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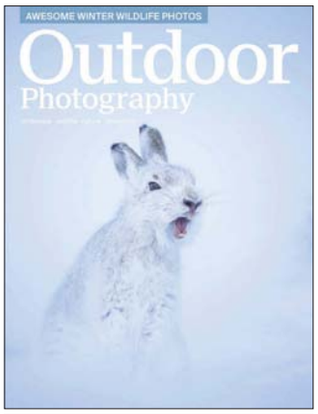
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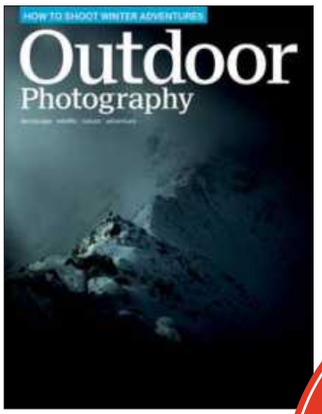
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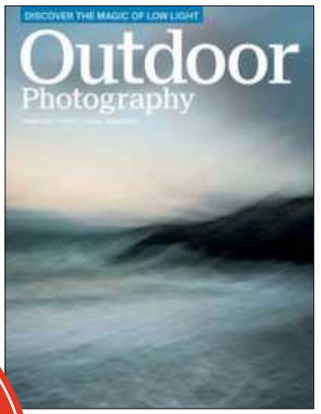
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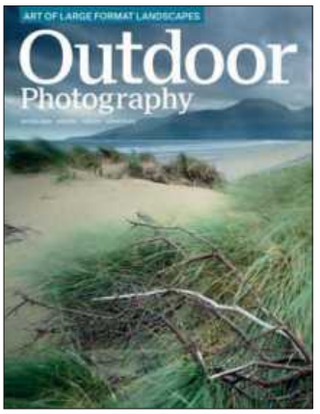
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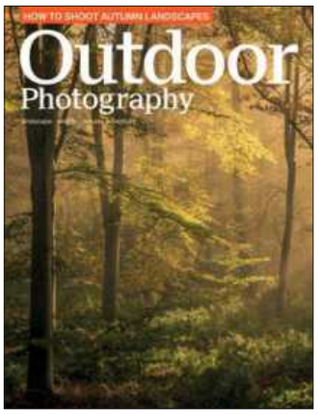


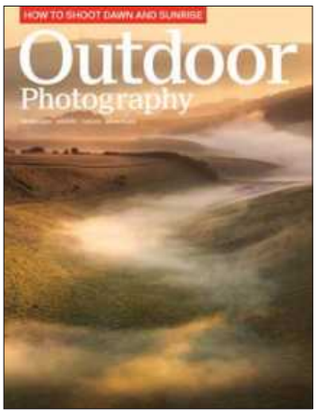


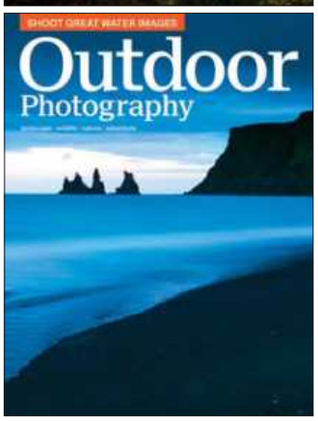


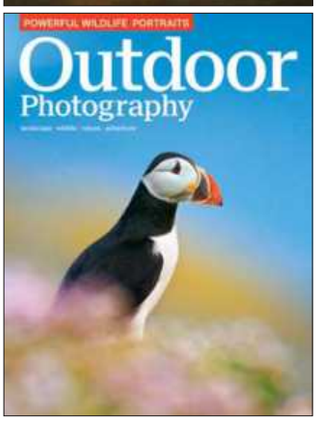


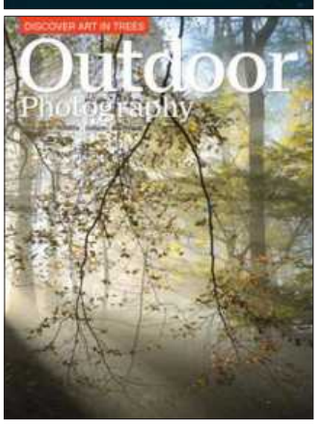


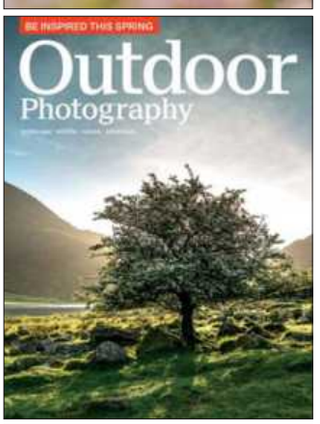






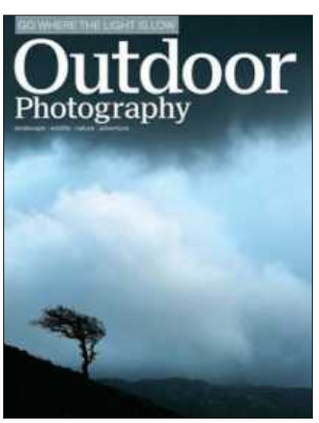


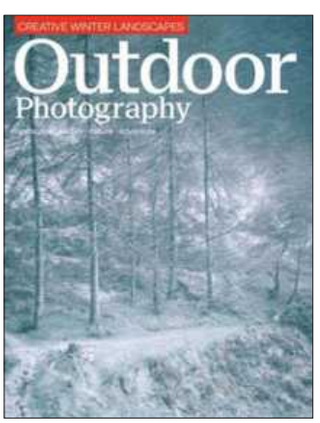


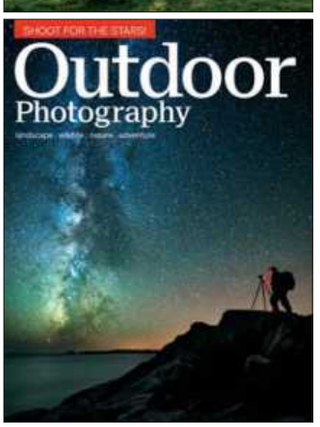












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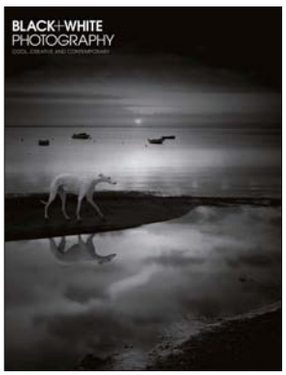
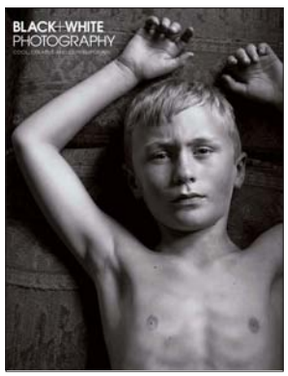
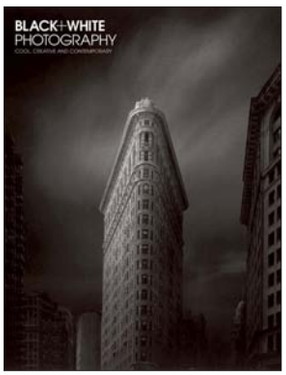
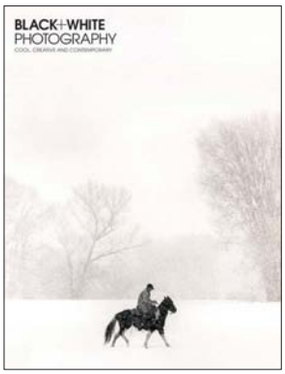
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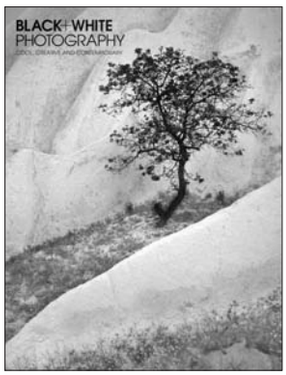


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Big Cats at WHF, Smarden in Kent £155
April 2nd, April 23rd, April 30th; Up close to African Lions, Bengal + Siberian + Sumatran Tigers, Serval, Cheetah, Pumas, Jungle Cat, Amur & Snow Leopards, Black Leopards, Clouded Leopards, Fishing Cat. Large open enclosures. UK's most popular photo workshop. Really special photo opportunities from just inches away. Two sets of Lion Cubs born July & August 2013. Huge natural enclosure. Max 12 clients.

Big Cats at WHF, Smarden in Kent - Specialist event 6 photographers - incl. Jaguar £199
March 31st, April 1st, 22nd, 29th; Full day as above, but with additional space at each enclosure. Time is also put aside to review your photos at lunchtime. One to one tuition throughout this very special day. You wil see all the animals as above and you will have more personal interaction with the cats. Now including Jaguar.

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Gorillas & African Safari Experience, Port Lympne £155
April 3rd, 24th, May 1st, 2nd; 3 gorilla sessions. No wires, fences or bars throughout the day. Clean backgrounds plus Privileged Access. Photograph at eye level over moat. Huge male silverbacks + family group. Private VIP Safari for 2.5 hours. Rhinos, Wildebeest, Eland, Zebras, Giraffes, Buffalo, Ostriches, various Deer.

Birds of Prey Workshop, Bedford £99
April 16th, 17th; Private flying displays on pre-determined flightpath helps you to focus on birds in flight. Excellent opportunities with carefully chosen backgrounds. Also static shots in outstanding natural locations. Jesses carefully hidden. This location boasts one of the largest collections of Birds of Prey in the UK. White tailed Sea Eagle, Bald Eagles, Hawks, Owls, Falcons, Kestrels, Buzzards and Long Eared Owl (new).



Foxes, Otters, Wildcats, Badgers & more, Surrey. £145
July 13, 14, 15; Inside enclosures 'til sunset. Also Owls, Snakes, Badgers, Polecats, Weasels, Stoats, Hedgehog, Harvest Mice & various Deer. 2 sessions with the foxes, sometimes only inches away from you. inside encloses with Foxes, Otters, Scottish Wildcats. Badgers GUARANTEED. No fences or wires to shoot through.

Small Cats Workshop, Welwyn, Herts. £99
April 4, 25, 28; Privileged access to Snow Leopards, Amur Leopards, Pumas, Caracal, Leopard Cat, Lynx, Servals, Golden Cat. As featured on recent series of TV programs on Animal Planet. Small groups. Tuition

Bass Rock Gannets £225
June 5th, 12th, 20th, 23rd; Private boat. Exclusive use of island for just 10 photographers. 50,000 pairs of nesting gannets on one small island. 4.5 hours photography. Amazing close-ups & fantastic flight shots. Large crate of fish fed to gannets as they dive into the sea. An amazing sight that you will never forget.



Gannets diving off Bass Rock £99
June 24th; Fantastic new workshop for 2014. We sail round Bass Rock without landing on the island. A whole hour of throwing fish into the sea for the Gannets to catch. Amazing diving shots. 1,000 + dives. Tuition.

Farne Islands Puffins (Over 5 hrs photography) £89
June 4th, 11th, 17th, 25th; 20 species of birds. 50,000 puffins. Guillemots, Razorbills, Shag, Arctic Tern colony etc. You will get unbelievably close to some of the species. Get that much sought after shot of Puffins with their beaks crammed full of sand eels. Tips and Tuition. Approximately 5 hours photography.



Pro Birds of Prey Shoot, Bamburgh, Northumberland. £139
June 18th, 19th; Amazing photography opportunities. Hill top views overlooking large extensive valleys and seascapes. Rocks and gorse bushes abound. Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Snowy Owl, Eagle Owl and Barn Owl will be placed in really natural situations. Jesses will be hidden where possible for those perfect "in the wild" shots. Can combine with Bass/Farne as this location is very close to the Farne Islands.

Pro Birds of Prey Shoot (2) with Short Eared Owl, Northumberland. £139
June 14th, 21st, 27th; Both the falconer and the birds are different to workshop above. Venues are about 20 miles apart. We will take two of the birds down to an amazingly beautiful, little known waterfall. This will provide a unique backdrop for your subjects. The falls are surrounded by trees covered with mosses and lichens. We will photograph up to 10 different species of birds, mainly British. Maximum 8 photographers.

Small Mammals, Insects & Reptiles NEW WORKSHOP £199
June 6, 7; Indoor studio set-ups ensuring professional quality photos of stunning subjects. Studio lighting set up for you. Triggers to fit your camera supplied. Cameras and lenses can be loaned without charge. Innovative set-ups to maximise your opportunities. Max 4 persons. Harvest Mice, Red Eyed Tree Frogs, Praying Mantis, Locust, Beardeed Dragon, Scorpion, Tarantula, Snakes, Lizards etc.



Birds of Prey on Lindisfarne (Holy Island) incl. Short Eared Owl NEW WORKSHOP £139
JUNE 2, 3; New workshop for 2016. Photograph a Short Eared Owl in its natural habitat before continuing with selection from Eagle Owl, Long Eared Owl, Barn Owl, Buzzard, Kestrel, Little Owl, Tawny Owl using boats, Lindisfarne Castle, boat houses & fishing props as backdrops.















For more information, please visit the website or call John Wright on 01664 474040 or 07779 648850 (preferred). We will be most happy to discuss any workshop in detail, or to send more detailed leaflets to anyone without internet access.
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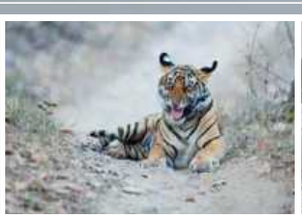
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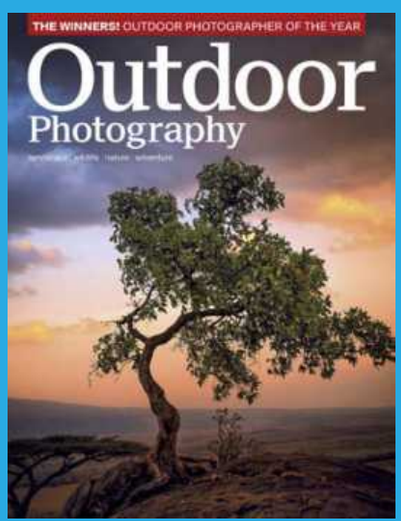
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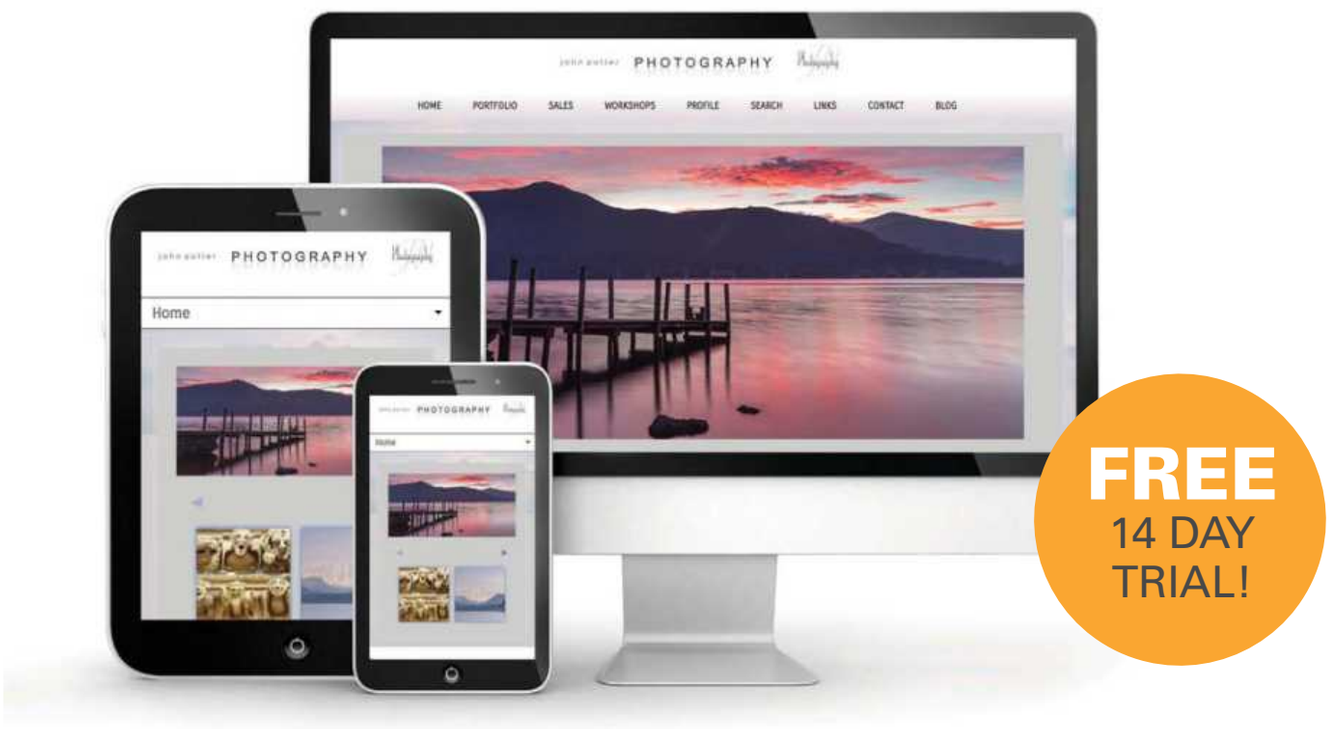
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IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

Low light

In our November issue we challenged you to produce stunning images in low light conditions, and we were very impressed with the results. This is our winner of the Fjällräven Bergen 30 backpack and eight runners-up

WINNER

Dylan Nardini

(*opposite*) This shot was taken on the road to Wintercleugh looking towards Hitteril Hill, Clydesdale. I was on the hunt for winter light, which was emerging briefly between heavy rain and hail showers. This burst lit up Daer Water, a short stretch of river that transforms to become the beginning of the mighty river Clyde. The Southern Upland Way passes just behind the small plantation in the distance, which the soft low light had silhouetted. I could shoot all day in conditions like this; the difficulty in being in the right place for the light makes it alluring.

Nikon D810 with Sigma 70-200mm f/2.8 lens at 70mm, ISO 100, 1/125sec at f/11, polariser, handheld, cropping and tonal adjustments in Lightroom CC, converted to black & white in Silver Efex Pro 2

dylannardini.com

Tony Johnston

(*below left*) The image was taken 45 minutes after sunset in November at Aldingham beach, near Ulverston, Cumbria. I originally wanted a black & white image of the old decaying breakwater, using a long exposure to flatten the tide and create some movement in the clouds. When I processed it I preferred the colours the low light had created, so left it as a colour image.

Pentax K5 with Sigma 10-20mm lens at 10mm, ISO 100, 30sec at f/11, Manfrotto 290 tripod

Kasia Nowak

(*below right*) The image was taken last September on a misty morning in Bushy Park in south-west London. I like the way the reflection merges with reality, making the silhouettes of the swans look almost abstract.

Nikon D800 with Nikkor 24-70mm lens at 70mm, ISO 100, 1/250sec at f/8, tripod

kasianowak.com

Christopher Davies

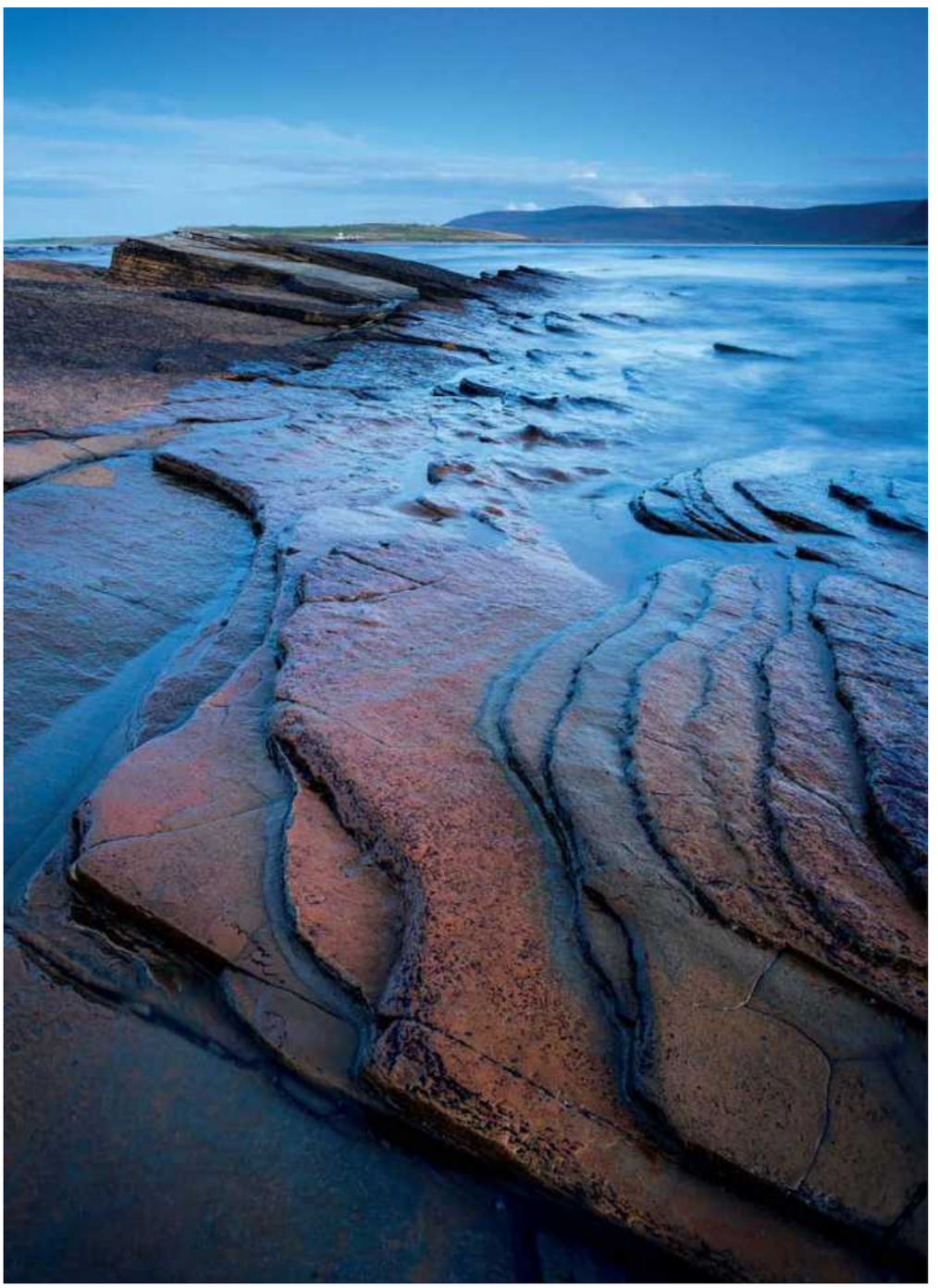
(*bottom*) Sometimes the most inspiring photography can be found right on your doorstep. After repeated visits to Brereton Heath local nature reserve in Cheshire – only three miles from my house – one early morning











trip provided an eerie mist that, in the low light, gave way to a softly sculpted scene.
Nikon D810 with Nikon 85mm f/1.4 G lens, ISO 64, 1/400sec at f/4, cable release, mirror lock-up, Manfrotto tripod
correctaperture.com

Robin Higginson

(*left, top*) The Libery Belle at Thorpe Bay, Essex, is a favoured and peaceful location at sunrise. Low tide here provides an opportunity to get closer to the boats. The returning tide amazes me, as the water can be seen trickling slowly on the seabed. The misty appearance around the boat's chain is this water movement visualised.
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon EF 17-40mm f/4L USM lens at 17mm, ISO 400, 52sec at f/10, Lee Big Stopper, Lee 0.9 hard ND grad, tripod
robinsphotography.wordpress.com

David Shawe

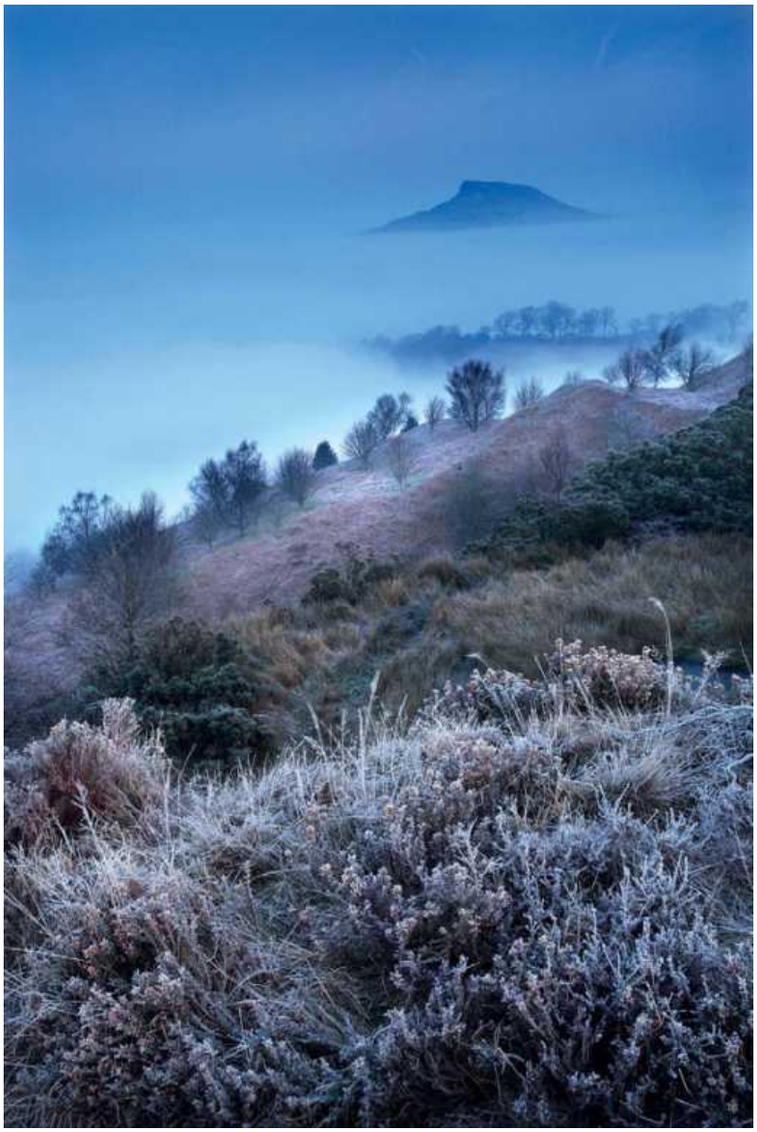
(*left, bottom*) Warebeth beach, Stromness, Orkney. Half an hour after sunset the ebbing tide gradually revealed these coloured slabs of rock on this fascinating stretch of coastline. It had not been a spectacular sunset, but the twilight brought a bluish tint to the scene, which contrasted nicely with the warmer tones of the rocks. The polariser helped enhance the colours.
Canon EOS 5D MkIII with Canon EF 17-40mm f/4L lens at 21mm, ISO 100, 8sec at f/11, Lee 0.6 hard ND grad, polariser, tripod
davidshawephotography.com

Mark Helliwell

(*opposite, top left*) This image of Whitby pier in North Yorkshire was taken about 20 minutes before sunrise on a windy October morning. Strangely, there were no other photographers around, so I took advantage of that and opted for the classic composition of this well-photographed location. I worked hard to ensure there was clear separation between the top of the railings and pier on the right, and positioned the two lights at the end of each pier roughly on the third. It was still quite dark so I didn't need any filters to balance exposure, and the exposure time of 30 seconds was long enough to create some movement in the clouds.
Nikon D810 with Nikkor 16-35 lens at 16mm, ISO 200, 30sec at f/8, tripod
markhelliwell.com







Ann M Holmes

(above) This is a view of the Isle of Rum with a dramatic squall, taken from the cliffs near Cleadale on Eigg. The weather was extremely volatile during my stay last summer on the Small Isles, with almost perpetual rain over Rum. I love shooting storms, and on this occasion there was a particularly wonderful interplay as the light penetrated the rapidly moving bands of rain. I managed just a handful of handheld shots before the squall was over me too, making me cold and wet.

Nikon D800 with Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 AFS VR lens at 125mm, ISO 400, 1/400sec at f/9

annmholmes.co.uk

Malcolm Blenkey

(above, right) I know this location well, and with frost and fog in the weather forecast I knew a dawn shoot would provide a good opportunity to photograph Roseberry Topping appearing above the valley fog. I found that a two-stop neutral density graduated filter was sufficient to hold the detail in the sky, and all that was required in post-processing when I got back home was a bit of foreground dodging to bring up the highlights.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with Canon EF 24-105mm L lens at 35mm, ISO 100, 1/4sec at f/20, 2-stop ND grad, tripod

YOUR NEXT CHALLENGE

Masterful composition

No matter what the subject matter, an extraordinary photograph almost always relies heavily on superb composition. Whether it's achieved by creating imaginary depth with the use of lead-in lines, such as rivers, fallen trees or coastlines, or harnessing the power of the rule of thirds or the Golden Ratio, it can transform an image and help a viewer connect with it on a deeper level. We want to see your most powerful images that bring together some of the most important aspects of composition. Make sure you read Lee Frost's informative guide to composition on page 30, and then send us the well-composed images that stand out in your collection; we can't wait to see them!

Closing date for entries is 13 April 2016

See page 86 for an entry form and our terms and conditions.

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The winner of the 'Masterful composition' challenge will not only have their image published in the July 2016 issue of *OP*, but will also receive a Joby GorillaPod Focus Tripod with Ball Head X and a Joby Pro Sling Strap, together worth £197! The strong and lightweight Focus Tripod, with its flexible and wrappable legs, and Ball Head X are perfect for setting up your professional cameras with large zoom lenses (weighing up to 5kg) in unusual or awkward situations, to get perspectives that will make your images stand out. The superb Pro Sling Strap allows lightning quick and effortless responses in dynamic shooting situations, and the strap can be rapidly tailored to give a stable carrying platform thanks to the SpeedCinch System.

For more information, visit joby.com/gorillapod-focus-ballheadx




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Where in the world?

If you can identify the distinctive mountain peak in the image above, you will be in with a chance of winning a superb Snugpak Softie Jacket 6, worth £119.95!

NEW! ONLINE ENTRY

Where is it?

The photograph shows a distinctive mountain peak. But is it:

a) **Cerro Torre, Argentina**
b) **Gondoro Peak, Pakistan**
c) **Les Drus, France**

The correct answer and the winner's name will be published in OP205 (on sale 5 May 2016). Enter online at outdoorphotographymagazine.co.uk/c/where202, using 'mountain202' as the code, or send your answer to opcomp@thegmcgroup.com, stating 'Mountain peak' as the subject, or drop it in the post to: Where in the world – 'Mountain peak', OP, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN.

Deadline for entry is midnight on 30 March 2016.

THIS MONTH'S PRIZE

WORTH **£119.95**

Snugpak Softie Jacket 6

The Snugpak Softie Jacket 6 is a perfect jacket for chilly and unsettled days, with its roll-away hood for keeping you protected during unexpected showers and its warm and comfortable design that keeps you cosy in temperatures down to -5°C. This is Snugpak's latest development in all-weather jackets. The new design features hi-tech Paratex Micro material on the outer and Paratex Light on the inner, keeping any moisture away from your skin, so you stay warm and dry. The Softie Premier filling has great insulating properties, trapping heat and maximising comfort. The tailored fit, along with a water-resistant main zip and a high neck design, keeps out draughts. It's a great jacket for location shoots where you need to wait a while for the light to be right.

For more information please visit snugpak.com/outdoor/sj6-softie-jacket



DECEMBER ISSUE WINNER

In the December issue we asked you to identify the location of this beautiful river valley. The correct answer is:

c) Rapadalen, Sweden


© Jens Ottoson/Shutterstock

John New is the winner of the superb Lundhags Greij jacket. Congratulations, John! We'll be in touch with you shortly.

POINT101



image © Yiannis Roussakis

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dp0 Quattro

Reinventing the camera
Reinventing DP



Ultra-minimal distortion.
Introducing the extreme dp.

A difficult-to-manufacture large-diameter aspheric lens sits first in the optical group, reducing distortion to less than 1% at infinity. Minimal distortion is critical to ultra-wide-angle performance. The 14mm F4 lens of the dp0 Quattro is designed to deliver an even wider angle-of-view than the dp1 and ultra-minimal distortion. The dp0 exemplifies the spirit of the dp Quattro series.

dp1 Quattro	Wide	19mm (28mm) F2.8
dp2 Quattro	Standard	30mm (45mm) F2.8
dp3 Quattro	Mid-tele	50mm (75mm) F2.8

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